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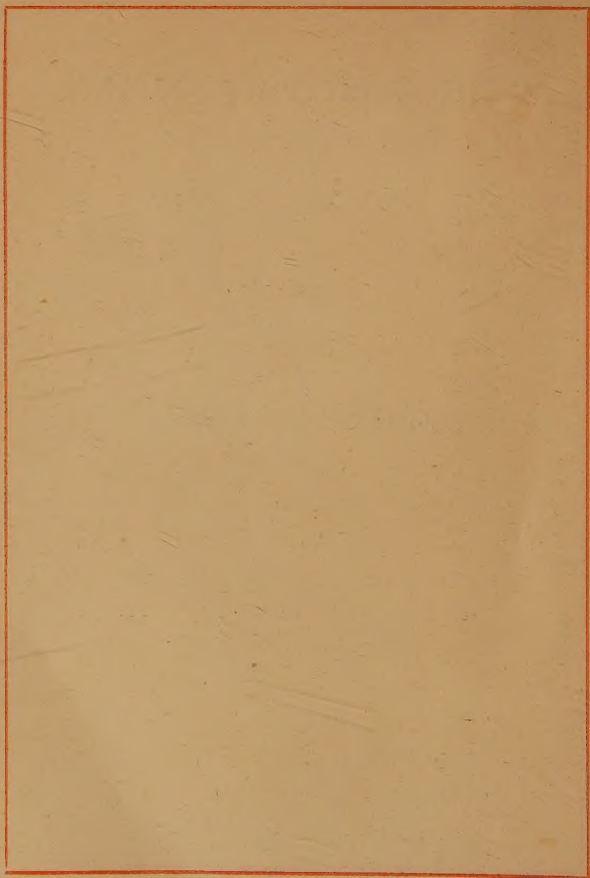
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The Canterbury Poets.

EDITED BY WILLIAM SHARP.

SOUTHEY'S POEMS.





GLECTIONS FROM THE
POEMS OF ROBERT
SOUTHEY. EDITED,
WITH BIOGRAPHICAL AND
CRITICAL INTRODUCTION, BY
SIDNEY R. THOMPSON.

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ROBERT SOUTHEY.

TO say that although the principles of art are in their essentials eternal and changeless, the fashionable canons of artistic criticism are temporal and changing, is a platitude almost unpardonable; but it is one which is inevitably suggested to the critic who should endeavour, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, to write in praise of Robert Southey. The list of England's laureates names no poet more widely separated from the world of to-day than this man. Neglect has been his portion for many years—neglect undeserved, but scarcely unnatural, for the pervading spirit of his work is a calm and equable faith which is indeed unattainable, and perhaps undesired, by us. A poet whose characters are often purely abstract conceptions, unhumanly great alike in their virtues and their vices; a poet whose songs neither sweep our hearts with rushing storms of passion, nor lull us with their swooning sweetness, can hope for scanty audience to-day. And yet signs are not wanting

that the artistic temper of the age is undergoing change. For the poetry of passion must, in a large measure, share the transience of its theme; and though in the works of those modern poets who have sung of this most sweetly, there is much of abiding splendour, there is also much of which the world must soon weary. To immortalise the dream of an instant, to stay the dying glory of an afternoon, are things indeed possible to art; but it is always pertinent to inquire if the dream be of things high and holy, and if the day be fit to remain in our memory as a landmark. If these conditions be not fulfilled, then let the dream dissolve, and the sunset die. It is no disparagement of the vital beauty of contemporary poetry to say that much of it already shows signs of wear. It deals largely with mere interludes and swiftly passing phases of feeling which can have but little value beyond that derived from the skill with which they are analysed, or the beauty with which they are sung. But the skill must indeed be great which can lend an enduring interest to such subjects, and a poet who, in his youth, has found constant inspiration in these ephemeral amours, not seldom turns, in his maturer years, to the celebration of purer and nobler emotions. And the world, too, is sometimes glad to turn to poetry which is concerned with those higher states of

feeling which may more fitly be made immortal than fleeting gusts of passion. And since it is with these serener and stabler phases of the spiritual life of man that the poetry of Robert Southey is concerned, it is proposed, in introducing the present selection from his work, to say somewhat of the man, and to inquire in what measure that work fulfils the functions, thus briefly indicated, of the highest art.

There are few characters more inviting to the biographer than Southey's. He belongs to that class of writers whose books are seldom appreciated at their full worth until the men themselves have taken their places as fireside friends, and who work in his fashion, of whom it was said :—

“ Ille velut fidis arcana sodalibus olim,
Credebat libris, neque si male cesserat unquam
Decurrens alio, neque si bene ; quo fit ut omnis
Votiva pateat veluti descripta tabella
Vita senis.”

There are some poets into whose lives it is not well to inquire, for their best parts are shut in the covers of their books. But Southey brings his book in his hand, and his character and his feelings are mutually apocalyptic. When we have learned to know his loyal, noble soul, his pages become more warmly vital ; and things which before seemed trivial and poor are now informed with the

strength of that spirit to which nothing is common or worthless.

I.

ROBERT SOUTHEY was born in Bristol on the 12th of August 1774, his father then being a linen-draper in that city. His mother seems to have been a woman of singular moral beauty, than whom, to use her son's phrase, no human being brought into the world a larger share of original goodness. Such goodness was in her case coupled with excessive gentleness and submissiveness; and increasing worldly cares made her the more willing to yield to the invitation of her half-sister, Miss Tyler, that the child Robert should share her home in Bath. A proud, indolent, and entirely genteel person, Miss Tyler could not suffer her nephew to grow up as other children. He was kept in strict seclusion, uncontaminated by the society of other and less respectable infants; and it is a strong proof of his innate strength of character, that a child whose most impressionable years were spent in such an atmosphere, did not develop into a complete and aggressive prig. But at least there was a garden in which he could play, though the making of mud-pies, that supremest joy of the autochthonic infant, was probably denied him. And occasionally he was permitted, in company with

Shadrach Weeks, his aunt's servant-boy, to explore Avon-side in search of wild flowers. His greatest delight, however, was the theatre, at which most of his evenings were spent, for Miss Tyler was a devotee of the drama. At first the stage was a mere spectacle to the child; but before long his heart as well as his eyes came beneath the spell, until his interest extended from the stage to its whole literature, so that by his eighth year Shakespeare, and Beaumont and Fletcher, were familiar friends. But it was from the accidental discovery of Spenser's world of faerie that his real life dated. It was Una's kiss that awoke him, though he had already strayed wonderingly in the dreamland of Tasso and Ariosto. "No young lady," said he in after years, "of the present generation, falls to a new novel of Sir Walter Scott's with keener relish than I did that morning to the 'Faery Queen.'" His comparison, it must be feared, would be scarcely appropriate to-day. Thenceforth purely dramatic literature had lost much of its charm for him, and he cared rather to read, imitate, and in time to originate, epics and romances. They flowed from his juvenile pen with portentous facility, and by the end of his thirteenth year he had achieved epics founded on the stories of the Trojan Brutus, Egbert, the defeat and death of Richard, and the Union of the

two Roses, besides various heroic epistles and translations.

Southey's school-life was, at this time, merely that of thousands of other boys. First of all he was given over to the tender mercies of Ma'am Powell, a dame of forbidding aspect and manners, under whose ministrations he remained until he was six. Then he was sent to a school kept by a Mr. Foot, whose cruelties and petty tyrannies left a deep mark in Southey's memory. He did not remain here long, for shortly after Foot's death he was removed to a boarding-school at Corston, a village nine miles from Bristol. His life here is recorded with much fidelity, and not a little pathos, in the poem called "The Retrospect." Thomas Flower, the master, was a mathematician and astronomer, and left the pupils largely to the care of his son, with disastrous results. Flower had married, on the death of his first wife, one of his servants ; his domestic life became more and more unhappy, until on the appearance of disease, consequent on the scandalous neglect of the cleanliness and health of the boys, the school was broken up. After this came the happiest of his school days, spent at an establishment in Bristol, which was conducted by William Williams, of whom Southey used afterwards to speak with much kindness as the pedagogue who led him farthest,

and most gently, along the paths of infantine wisdom.

At length the time came when Southey, now a tall handsome boy of fourteen, was fit to be sent to Westminster School. He was placed in the house of Samuel Hayes, whose Christian name was replaced by the nickname of Botch, given him from his method of mending his pupil's verses. The head boy of the house was too gentle and inoffensive to keep bullying in check; and Southey's happiness was marred by the torments inflicted on him by a lad whose mildest amusement was to pour water in a sleeper's ear, and his highest, the attempt to hang Southey out of an upper window by his leg. But in spite of such evils, the four years spent at Westminster had a powerful effect on his character. He had not, indeed, much opportunity of exercising his poetic gifts, although on one occasion he offered an elegy on his sister's death to a school magazine called *The Trifler*. But, alas, it was not accepted; and his literary faculties found other employment in the production of *The Flagellant*, a periodical conducted by the elder boys. To this he contributed a sarcastic article on corporal punishment, the invention of which was ascribed to the devil. Dr. Vincent commenced a prosecution for libel against the publisher; Southey at once admitted his

responsibility, and, in spite of his apologies, was privately expelled.

During his residence there he had spent many of his leisure hours in poring over the dusty folios in a neighbouring library. Picart's *Religious Ceremonies* was the book which took captive his imagination, and in the reading of it he formed the huge intention of writing epics illustrative of all the chief religions of the world—a design which resulted later in the writing of *Kehama* and *Thalaba*. To carry out so vast an undertaking would require a genius stronger and of wider scope than Southey's, and it is perhaps well for his memory that he did not attempt it. More important was the effect produced on his romantic spirit by the echoes of the great world outside that broke in upon the quiet of Westminster. Feverishly did the ardent boy listen to the news of the American contests; and his sympathies were awakened and inflamed by the sounds of strife that came from France. Europe was "on fire with freedom;" how should a spirit such as his remain unkindled? To all young and high souls, the way to freedom seems to be through the valley of revolution. It seemed so to Southey, and he proceeded from Westminster to Oxford an enthusiastic republican.

The noise of his literary escapade had preceded

him, and the authorities of Christ Church refused to admit him to residence. He accordingly entered at Balliol, and commenced his residence there in January 1793. It was not with any very golden hopes that he entered upon a phase of life so strange, in which he feared to meet with little but bigotry and narrow pride. To break his own boyishly rebellious spirit, and to learn to pay respect to men "remarkable only for great wigs and little wisdom," seemed his immediate tasks. Nor was the prospect of taking orders one more congenial to a young man who, although imbued with singularly masculine religious feelings, was still in revolt against old and outworn forms. But, nevertheless, his residence was more pleasant than he had hoped. The letters written to his friends at that time are, on the whole, indications of a mind gradually outgrowing its weaknesses, and learning to look on life with saner and larger judgment. By the college education he profited but little ; but the friendships he formed were of lasting worth in helping to mould his character. During his first year at Oxford "*Joan of Arc*," his first important work, was begun, and there is in this poem some evidence of the disturbed condition of his mind. He had eulogised therein the principles on which he imagined the French revolutionists to be acting ; but the murder of Brissot shewed him plainly

enough how wrong his estimate had been. He had supposed that the leaders in that movement were identical with the poetic ideal of a revolutionist—unselfish, high-souled, and only reluctantly stern. But he saw now that he must look elsewhere for the fulfilment of his dreams, though, indeed, he knew not where to look. “I am sick of this world,” he writes to his friend Bedford, “and discontented with everyone in it. The murder of Brissot has completely harrowed up my faculties, and I begin to believe that virtue can only aspire to content in obscurity, for happiness is out of the question.” The weariness and sadness of one who leaves a world of dreams for a world of men, selfish and sordid, had come upon his heart, and he saw little hope for any. “Nineteen years have elapsed since I set sail upon the ocean of life in an ill-provided boat; the vessel weathered many a storm, and I took every distant cloud for land; still pushing for the Fortunate Islands, I discovered that they existed not for me, and that, like others better and wiser than myself, I must be contented to wander about and never gain the port.” Nor was this all; ahead of him loomed the Church, into which his honesty no less than his inclinations forbade him to enter. He, therefore, proposed to qualify himself for the medical profession, but the idea was soon abandoned in consequence of his invincible disgust

at the horrors of the dissecting room, and, for a while, his social prospects seemed hopelessly dark.

It was about this time that he made the acquaintance of Coleridge, who had just terminated his brief and unheroic military career, and was now on a visit to Oxford. Southey was much impressed with his new friend. "He is of most uncommon merit—of the strongest genius, the clearest judgment, the best heart," was the verdict. The aspirations of the two young men were very similar. Each was discontented with the surrounding society; each was seeking some higher and nobler life. Already Southey had indulged in vague dreams of a new society to be founded in some distant land, "where man should be considered as more valuable than money; where he could till the earth, and provide by honest industry the meal which his wife would dress with pleasing care." Coleridge, too, had burned to found a new Utopia; and he found in Southey a worthy helper. And so the great scheme of Pantisocracy was formed, and the two young poets discoursed upon its glories to all their friends. The equal government of all—that indeed was a noble text. Its details were fascinating—on paper. As many of their friends as possible were to emigrate to America, and there buy land with their united contributions, and till it with their united labour. Each man would select

a wife, who should do the domestic work, and lighten the community with her gentleness and love. There was but one hindrance to the immediate success of the plan; they had no money. Southey had persuaded Miss Edith Fricker to share in the splendours of Pantisocracy as his wife. Her sister Sarah was enchanted with its advantages as painted glowingly by Coleridge; but still—they had no money, and saw no way of raising £150, the sum necessary for the wants of each. There was no hope that the genteel Aunt Tyler would help them. For a long time the scheme was carefully concealed from her; but when at length it reached her ears, the good lady cast her nephew from her with scorn and wrath, unappeasable. Southey was driven from the house on the 17th of October 1794, to trudge, penniless, to his mother's house at Bath. Such are the sorrowful chances of juvenile reformers. Unwillingly they began to realise the impossible nature of their scheme, as at first drawn up, and they proposed to locate their earthly paradise nearer home. A farm should be taken in Wales, where they might try their 'prentice hands. But this scheme throve no better, for neither in Wales nor America is land to be bought without money. And so Pantisocracy, most delightful dream, was put tenderly away; and Southey set himself manfully to face the practical

problem of existence. Various were the plans thought of. A magazine should be started, of which Southey and Coleridge should be joint editors. But neither on this, nor on many other designs, did fortune smile, and at last Southey regretfully decided that he must follow some profession which should yield his daily bread, and of whose weary toils his lyre should be the *dulce lenimen*. The least uncongenial work was study of the law, and with some misgivings he informed his uncle of his decision to turn to this. But Mr. Hill, who had been not a little disturbed by his nephew's political vagaries, thought that a change of scene and surroundings might assist in bringing about a more stable mental condition ; and it was arranged that Southey and his uncle should spend some months in Lisbon before the legal studies were entered upon. The young man felt, however, that his marriage to Miss Edith Fricker should be no longer postponed, and on the 14th of November 1795 the two were married at Bristol, to separate at the church door. Mrs. Southey returned to her home, and her husband started for Falmouth, there to await a suitable day for the voyage.

The time spent in Lisbon, "From which place God grant me a speedy deliverance," as he says at the head of one letter, does not seem to have been wholly unhappy or profitless. He had acquired an

intimate knowledge of the Peninsular languages and literature, which afterwards stood him in good stead ; and he returned home purged of many youthful weaknesses. On rejoining his wife, he lived for some time in the neighbourhood of Bristol, working hard at many of the formerly-planned poetic designs—amongst which was the poem which developed later into “Thalaba”—and writing, in his leisure hours, for *The Monthly Magazine*. At this time, too, “Joan of Arc,” the poem which was the foundation of future fame, was published by Cottle. Crude and ill-balanced though it was, it was not a beginning to be despised ; but to the last Southey himself valued it rather as a distinct landmark in his career than for its intrinsic interest. To its second book Coleridge contributed four hundred lines, which were excised from later editions, not unwisely. But “Joan” found little favour with the public, and since debts and responsibilities were accumulating, Southey gave up the work and the scenes he loved so well, and went to London to prosecute earnestly his legal studies. His letters tell of the hard struggle between duty and inclination ; but with a man so strong and courageous, the issue was not doubtful. The weary London life was varied by the evenings devoted to “Madoc,” to the composition of which all other literary work

was postponed, but with the spring of 1797 the love of the country — the poet's *Heimwuch* — grew stronger upon him. Surely the musty laws might be studied elsewhere than in London ; and so lodgings were taken at Burton, in Hampshire, and thither the Southey family repaired. With this fresh step came the gradual breaking up of the plans not long formed. A visit to Norwich, where he met the Martineaus and many other new friends, was followed by a removal to Westbury, Bristol, where for twelve months the muse was worshipped most diligently. "Madoc" and "Thalaba" progressed rapidly, and here also were written many of the best of Southey's lyrics and ballads. But the incessant work had been too much for his health ; and the weakness of his heart and nervous system was so evident, that a second voyage to Lisbon was decided upon. Accompanied by his wife, he left England in the spring of 1800, and was welcomed to Portugal by his uncle. Here he remained until June of the following year, chiefly occupied in collecting material for his colossal *History of Portugal*, in finishing and correcting for the press "Thalaba," and in commencing the new epic of "Kehama."

Returning to England with health completely restored, the Southeys settled at Greta Hall, Keswick, of which place Coleridge had written

enthusiastically. Before their final settlement here, however, Southey had been offered the post of secretary to Mr. Corry, the Irish Chancellor of the Exchequer. On the one hand were the evils of separation from his wife, dull work, and residence divided between London and Dublin; on the other were the advantages of a fixed salary of four hundred a-year, assured support for Mrs. Southey, and the not impossible little Southëys. So the post was accepted, but the work was so intermittent and trivial that before long it was resigned. Thus humorously does he describe the importance of his position, in a letter to his friend, John Rickman, of Dublin, whose good offices had secured for him the post:—"The chancellor and the scribe go on in the same way. The scribe has made out a catalogue of all books published since the commencement of '97 upon finance and scarcity; he hath also copied a paper written by J. R., containing some Irish alderman's hints about oak bark; and nothing more hath the scribe done in his vocation. Duly he calls at the chancellor's door; sometimes he is admitted to immediate audience; sometimes kicketh his heels in the ante-chamber (once he kicked them for cold, but now there is a fire); sometimes a gracious message emancipateth him for the day. Secrecy hath been enjoined him as to these state proceedings. On

three subjects he is directed to read and research—corn-laws, finance, tythes, according to their written order. Alas! they are heathen Greek to the scribe. He hath, indeed, in days of old read Adam Smith, and remembereth the general principle established; he presupposeth that about corn, as about everything else, the fewer laws the better; of finance he is even more ignorant; concerning tythes, something he knoweth of the Levitical law, somewhat approveth he of a commutation for land, something suspecteth he why they are to be altered; gladly would the people buy off the burthen, gladly would the government receive the purchase-money—the scribe seeth objections thereunto. . . . The scribe hath been courteously treated, and introduced to a Mr. Ormsby; and this is all he knoweth of the home politics.”

On the 7th of September 1803 Southey took possession of Greta Hall. His home-coming was indeed a sad one. The death of his mother, on the 5th of January 1802, had thrown a deep shadow upon his life. “I have now lost all the friends of my infancy and childhood,” he says. “The whole recollection of my first ten years are connected with the dead.” And not long after this loss, Margaret, the first child of his marriage, in whose bright young life his love and hopes

had been so strongly rooted, died after a happily short illness. The new home was lonely and strange indeed ; much of his old life was buried in the two graves ; and the sight of Coleridge's child Sara moved him to keener grief. But before long his buoyant strength reasserted itself. Southey was not the man to waste his life in weak regret. The voice of the mountains spoke to him, and something of their eternal strength became his own.

The rest of his life is the history of his books. There is but little to chronicle of his outward circumstances ; and in the books and letters written by him from this time to his death, those who care to know more of his life may find the richest sources of knowledge. All the strong faculties of love were strengthened in him by the children born to him, by the wife for whose happiness he toiled so loyally, and who in return paid him such unstinted measure of affection and worship. His early friendships were deepened and some new ones formed. Chief among these new friends was Walter Savage Landor, whom he met at Bristol in 1808. Two characters more widely differing can scarcely be imagined, but the history of literary friendships—at present unwritten—records no more generous or close alliance than that of these giants of letters, who were each nobly emulous of deserving and giving highest

praise of the other. Long before, Southey had written of the "miraculous beauties" of "Gebir"; and had often said that he would walk forty miles to see its author. "Having seen him," he wrote, "I would gladly walk fourscore to see him again." Landor, on hearing that straitened means compelled Southey to lay aside his long-planned series of mythological poems, at once said, "Go on with them and I will pay for printing them." Of course the splendid offer could not be accepted; but it stung Southey into quickened activity, that the poems themselves might prove his gratitude. And so, little by little, "Kehama" and "Roderick" were completed, and submitted to Landor; and the friendship, thus begun, lasted until the "unsubduable old Roman" laid down his arms to Death.

In November 1807 Walter Scott had written to Southey, suggesting that he should become a contributor to the *Edinburgh*, and assuring him that Jeffrey, his flippant attacks upon "Madoc" and "Thalaba" notwithstanding, would think himself honoured by receiving contributions from their author. Southey, too generous to harbour ill-will, yet differed so entirely from Jeffrey on every important point that he felt it impossible to be his coadjutor in any way. But in 1808 the principles advocated by the *Edinburgh* became so obnoxious to many of its leading supporters, that it was

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determined to found a new Review which would direct the thoughts of England in another way. Under such auspices was the *Quarterly* issued in February 1809, with Southey as one of its chief contributors. The list of articles written by him therein is a striking proof of his vast erudition and sane philosophy. Books of history and travel were his most frequent themes ; but he found ample opportunity for setting forth the ethical and political truths of which the England of his times seemed to stand so much in need. A change had indeed come about in his political views ; but it affected not their objects, but the method of attainment. He was no longer a fiery republican, for he had learned that the end of anarchy is military despotism ; but he had not ceased to believe in the possibility of a society more evenly adjusted, and a social happiness more generously distributed. It was scarcely unnatural that some should be willing enough to exaggerate and misrepresent his altered opinions ; and his enemies found a convenient opportunity of attacking him when, in 1817, his early dramatic poem, "Wat Tyler," in which revolutionary sentiments of the most distinct type were placed in the mouths of the *dramatis personæ*, was surreptitiously published. The work, boyish enough, had remained forgotten and unpublished ; and Southey's indignation was justly strong when it was thus given to the world

without his knowledge. A Mr. William Smith, member of Parliament for Norwich, produced the poem in the course of a speech in the House, and, comparing its seditious sentiments with those then held by its author, called upon the government to prosecute him for his inflammatory utterances. To this malignity Southey replied in a long letter to Mr. Smith, which at once crushed the calumniator, and served to refute the charges brought against him by the anarchist party of his time, who accused him of deserting his old principles to cringe for aristocratic favour in his office of Laureate, to which he had been promoted in 1813. To summon Mr. William Smith to emerge further from the gloomy depths in which such creatures expiate their evil deeds would scarcely be profitable ; a few extracts, however, may be very well made from this fearless and triumphant review of Southey's political life. Having offered some account of his early beliefs, chief among which was this, that the inequalities of rank were a light evil compared to the inequalities of property, and those more fearful distinctions which the want of moral and intellectual culture occasions between man and man, he proceeds :—

“While I imbibed the republican opinions of the day, I escaped the atheism, and the leprous immorality which generally accompanied them. I cannot, therefore, join with Beattie in blessing

“The hour when I escaped the wrangling crew,
From Pyrrho’s maze and Epicurus’ sty.”

For I was never lost in the one, nor defiled in the other. . . . And what is the change in the opinions of Mr. Southey, which have drawn upon him the ponderous displeasure of William Smith? . . . He has ceased to believe that old monarchical countries are capable of republican forms of government. He has ceased to think that he understood the principles of government, and the nature of man and society, before he was one-and-twenty years of age. He has ceased to suppose that men who neither cultivate their intellectual nor their moral faculties can understand them at any age. He has ceased to wish for revolutions even in countries where great alteration is to be desired, because he has seen that the end of anarchy is military despotism. But he has not ceased to love liberty with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his strength; he has not ceased to abhor the wickedness of ambition, and to sympathise with those who were engaged in the defence of their country, and in a righteous cause. . . . The one object to which I have ever been desirous of contributing according to my power, is the removal of those obstacles by which the improvement of mankind is impeded. This has been the

pole-star of my course ; the needle has shifted according to the movements of the state vessel wherein I am embarked, but the direction to which it points has always been the same. I did not fall into the error of those who, having been the friends of France when they imagined that the cause of liberty was implicated in her success, transferred their attachment from the Republic to the Military Tyranny in which it ended, and regarded with complacency the progress of oppression because France was the oppressor. 'They had turned their faces toward the East in the morning to worship the rising sun, and in the evening they were looking eastward, obstinately affirming that still the sun was there.' I, on the contrary, altered my position as the world went round."¹

Southey then proceeds to touch upon the important questions of the day, boldly declaring that it was the duty of government to quell the riot and disorder then prevalent (it should be remembered that in the year 1817 England was in a dangerously turbulent state) ; to diminish the burden of the poor-rates, and to provide for the education of the lower classes ; and thus concludes his declaration of faith :—

"How far the writings of Mr. Southey may be

¹ Southey here quotes his own words, written in 1809.

found to deserve a favourable acceptance from after ages, time will decide ; but a name which, whether worthily or not, has been conspicuous in the literary history of its age, will certainly not perish. . . . It will be related that he lived in the bosom of his family, in absolute retirement ; that in all his writings there breathed the same abhorrence of oppression and immorality, the same spirit of devotion, and the same ardent wishes for the melioration of mankind ; and that the only charge which malice could bring against him was, that as he grew older, his opinions altered concerning the means by which that melioration was to be effected, and that as he learnt to understand the institutions of his country, he learnt to appreciate them rightly, to love, and to revere, and to defend them. It will be said of him, that in an age of personality he abstained from satire ; and that during the course of his literary life, often as he was assailed, the only occasion on which he ever condescended to reply, was when a certain Mr. William Smith insulted him in Parliament with the appellation of renegade. On that occasion, it will be said, he vindicated himself, as it became him to do, and treated his calumniator with just and memorable severity. Whether it shall be added, that Mr. William Smith redeemed his own character by coming forward with honest

manliness, and acknowledging that he had spoken rashly and unjustly, concerns himself, but is not of the slightest importance to me."

From this time forward Southey's life became one incessant and stupendous industry, though he had now almost abandoned poetical writing. As one reads his letters, there is ever some fresh plan suggested, some virgin soil discovered. Now it occurs to him that a history of the Jews since their dispersion would be very valuable, and he proposes the establishment of an academy to bespeak and publish such works; then he enters into lengthy correspondence on the possibility of uniting the Wesleyan Methodists to the Established Church; and he sketches a far-reaching "History of the Monastic Orders." But such plans as these were all subservient to the larger works on which he was engaged—such as the vast *History of the Peninsular War*, the *History of Brazil*, the *Life of Wesley*, and the *Life and Works of Cowper*. With these, however, we have little concern, though in truth it is in them that Southey's best powers are seen most plainly. Much of his work was necessarily enforced and irksome; but it was well repaid, when some box of glorious books would arrive from London or Lisbon. "Talk of the happiness of getting a great prize in the lottery! What is that to the opening

a box of books? The joy upon lifting up the cover must be something like what we shall feel when Peter the Porter opens the door upstairs, and says, 'Please to walk in, sir.' It will be a great delight to me in the next world to take a fly and visit these old worthies, who are my only society here, and tell them what excellent company I found them here at the lakes of Cumberland, two centuries after they had been dead and turned to dust. In plain truth, I exist more among the dead than the living, and think more about them, and, perhaps, feel more about them." For so loving a student, the dead among whom he passed his days are voiceful evermore.

In 1834 a new and heavier sorrow came upon him. His wife had long been seriously weak and ill, but towards the end of the year her mental powers completely broke down, and she was removed to an asylum, whence she returned home only to die. Remembering the crescent load of grief laid upon him, one reads with keener sympathy such lines as these, taken from a letter addressed by him to a literary lady, who had informed him that the whole of her happiness was dependant upon literary pursuits:—"Something better than literature is necessary to happiness. . . . I am no Methodist, no sectarian, no bigot, no formalist. My natural spirits are buoyant

beyond those of any person—man, woman, or child—whom I ever saw or heard of. They have had enough to try them, and sink them, and it is by religion alone that I shall be enabled to pass the remainder of my days in cheerfulness and hope. Without hope there can be no happiness; and without religion no hope but such as deceives.” And at the age of forty-six, even then hard stricken, he can say, “I have lived in the sunshine, and am still looking forward with hope.” It was not strange that such a man should be found ever standing with hand outstretched to the helpless and weak. His generous spirit was never happier than when helping those who came to him. Two names of his fellow-poets will ever be bound with his own; though in the case of Chatterton the help was conferred upon the relatives of that unhappy boy, for he himself had found rest and welcome on the breast of a mother tenderer than life; but Henry Kirke White certainly owed his short measure of success to the generous kindness of Southey. And the history of Coleridge speaks trumpet-tongued of the love bestowed upon himself, and the shelter given to his deserted wife and children by the man whose virtues were so malignantly denied by many of his contemporaries.

After the death of his wife, his years were grey enough; although the addition of £300 to his

pension, made by Sir Robert Peel, as a tribute to the Laureate's high services, had materially decreased his domestic anxieties. The increase of pension had been preceded by the offer of a baronetcy, which Southey had wisely declined, on the score of his comparative poverty, which caused him grave fears for the future of his children. Sir Robert's timely thoughtfulness put them beyond the reach of care, and it was with a lighter heart that he joined a party of his friends on a tour through Normandy, Brittany, and Lorraine. But buoyed up as he was with the change and excitement, signs were not wanting of his failing health : shewn chiefly in the gradual loss of memory and absence of mind. His letters shewed less of the old vigour and activity, while his friends were painfully conscious of the approaching end. Nor was he himself unaware that his rest was near ; and, as one of his friends wrote, the gentleness and resignation, so habitual, enhanced the charm of his manner, and his mind was beautiful even in its debility. The decay of the mental advanced more rapidly than that of the bodily powers ; and when he was no longer able to work, he would walk with restless, uncertain step, round his library, taking books down mechanically, or, as Wordsworth describes, "patting them affectionately like a child." Most pathetic of all was his distress

when, striving feebly and fruitlessly to recall some forgotten name, he would press his hand to his brow and cry, "Memory! memory! where art thou gone?" On the 21st of March 1843 the end came.

There is something sadly fitting in the death of this good and gentle man. For him whose life has been rent with stress of storm, or glorious with the deeds men call heroic, it may be well to seek the larger life as in the chariot of fire; but Southey was not of these. A great and loving heart, serene and faithful wisdom—these kept his life ever gentle and sweet; and Death took his hand not less gently, and led him to rest as a tired child.

II.

IT has already been pointed out that Southey's work can only be rated at its full worth when acquaintance has been made with his life. Looking in his face, holding his hand, his voice seems sweeter, and his message weighted with more authority. Something has been done, imperfectly indeed, by way of portraiture of a character so winning in its simplicity and so rare in its serene integrity. Attempt may now be made to offer some estimate of the scope and value of his poetic work.

Few writers can be so completely detached from the history of their times, and presented for criticism so entirely, as Southey. There are many

poets who are so subtly and inextricably connected with some important epoch or movement that it is almost impossible to see all round their work, or to consider them apart from their ancestors, or descendants, in the literary order, in which there are often bewildering genealogical mazes. But in that order Southey is, as it were, the sole descendant of some distant branch of the family, and he died without issue. This is not to say that he is entirely isolated from the influence of his times ; but it is certain that in an epoch when the air was shaken with revolution, when his spiritual environments were undergoing complete and startling changes, Southey retained his own individuality and aims intact to a singular degree. Even the Pantisocratic scheme lay outside his real poetic life ; and his serenity of temper remained unruffled by the storms to which so many spirits more passionate than his own were bowed. The fact is that Southey the poet was lacking in that high worldliness, that keen sense of the broad realities of life, which alone can make of the dreamer a leader of men, and keep him in sympathy of the closest sort with his fellows. No life that touched his own was without interest to him, or failed to awaken his love ; but humanity was to him an abstraction about which he could indeed think with a vaguely real emotion, but which was power-

less to move him in that directly personal way needful to a poet of the human. But his great and tender heart and quick sympathies are seen plainly enough in poems whose unaffected pathos no satire can destroy.

And though it may be urged that in his conception and treatment of the high moralities of life, as exhibited in his minor poems, there is something insular and *borné*, his larger works are unquestionably noticeable for breadth and dignity of tone. The ethical standard of his best work is very high ; but his imagination was not so over-abounding in energy that it ran riot, and took on forms of motiveless and fantastic beauty. The "supreme dominion" is not his, but the occasional lack of that fiery creative power is not seldom atoned for by the simple earnestness of his aim, and the unfaltering desire to touch his fellows to high purpose. It may also be admitted frankly that Southey has a tendency, too strongly marked, to "preach" consciously, and of malice aforethought, and the epics which he designed ostensibly to illustrate the underlying truths of various religions of the world are often marred as art by this failing. The greatest artist cares little to enforce a moral, still less to preconceive a story to that end, knowing that if he will but set forth his vision of life truly and simply there shall be found ample store of the

loftiest teaching, not less weighty for its subtlety and unconsciousness. But Southey's allegories, noble as they are, bear here and there some signs of elaboration and artificial preparation. This may be due in part to the nature of the scheme of which "Thalaba" and "Kehama" were but parts. This is most obvious in the case of "Thalaba," which, in spite of Southey's laborious attempts to impart the flavour of Mahomedanism, is yet lustily English in its spirit and teaching. The framework of the story is studiously Oriental; the clothing, too, is of the East, and the hands also; but the voice is the voice of Southey. These faults notwithstanding, the parable is a noble one, and informed with a deep truthfulness that sets it far above many works more excellent in grace of form, or completeness of workmanship.

For what is this allegory of Thalaba but the life of each one who is chosen to some high service against sin? Thalaba, whose father and brethren have been destroyed by the guile of the evil sorcerers who dwell in the Dom Daniel cavern beneath the sea, has been called by Heaven to become the instrument of its vengeance upon the guilty, and the deliverer of the earth from its oppressors. His childhood is passed in the quiet of the desert with Oneiza and her father, Moath, and love and peace are his lot until Lolaba the

sorcerer, bearing the enchanted ring which guides him to the appointed destroyer of his race, seeks their tent. His attempted murder of Thalaba is frustrated, and when the storm has slain him, Thalaba draws the ring from the dead magician's hand and dedicates it to God, whereby its powers work for his protection, and not his bane. But, armed though he is with his father's bow, he yet lacks the true talisman that is to aid him in his appointed warfare. He is bidden by his mother's spirit to seek for this in the cavern wherein the fallen angels, Haruth and Maruth, expiate their sin ; and in the cavern, reached through fearful ways, he learns that the talisman is Faith. With this armed he sets forth upon his mission, and still the craft of his enemies turns to his good, and their power is surely weakened. Once, indeed, he falls before temptation, and is content to accept earthly happiness with the restored Oneiza, rather than to pursue that higher glory which awaits him when he shall have destroyed the last enemy ; but swift punishment awakes him, for at his marriage with Oneiza Azrael the Death Angel stands by to snatch her from his arms, and he goes forth repentant and alone to his allotted task. Through strange and dreadful passes his end is reached ; and the voice and vision of his lost Oneiza, granted him on his last perilous voyage to the Enchanter's Cavern,

stay his spirit to its final and crowning struggle, and give foresight and promise of the reward that awaits him. The powers of evil are destroyed, though his own death alone can complete the work ; and the hours of his death and his triumph are one.

The loftiness of this parable is evident enough ; and it can scarcely be denied that Southey has wrought in a way not unworthy of his conception. The rhymeless stanza is at first strange and little pleasing, though the ear soon becomes tolerant of it ; and there has passed into his verse something of Eastern wildness and strength. To the dignity of the theme weighty testimony has been borne by one of the greatest intellects of our time. Cardinal Newman has told us (*Apologia pro Vita Sua*, p. 98) that, at the period of his life when he was becoming most conscious that he had been marked out for highest service, this poem of "Thalaba" was the writing to which he oftenest turned, apparently finding in its hero the protagonist of all spiritual champions. And when to such praise is added that of Walter Savage Landor, and of others of the giants who were on the earth in these days, it may well be asked whether the indifference of modern critics may not arise from some defects in their own sympathy and insight rather than from dulness in the poems. To pass from the ingenious

boudoir tragedies and elaborate *ennui* of much of our current literature to the ethic strength and simplicity of such work as Southey's is sanative in the highest degree. It may frankly be admitted, with respect to "Kehama" as well as to "Thalaba," that the criticism is not forceless which objects that Southey's heroes are of too abstract a sort to awaken general and vital sympathy. But it can not apply with equal force to "Roderick," which has a far keener human interest. The hero of this poem is no far-off shadowy creature ; he is a man, with a man's passions, and thoughts, and weakness, who treads the common path, and is kin to ourselves by his failures. And in point of technique also, "Roderick" may be taken as representing Southey's maturer powers. His faculty of simple, vivid description is here at its highest, though, like most of his predecessors and contemporaries, he only looked upon Nature from the outside ; and the dramatic quality is here more strongly developed than in his other work. The scene in which Florinda opens her weary heart unwittingly to the sharer of her sins, has a force and pathos not often found in contemporary writing. The portraits of each stage in Roderick's spiritual growth are drawn with no little subtlety, and the first and last of these are set over against each other in powerful contrast. At first Roderick is

only a great sinner, whose crimes are punished by loss of the glory he had tarnished, and the power he had betrayed ; but we see him led up the steep hill of penitence, rising by each act of self-renunciation, until he stands upon its highest peak as the saviour of his country. It would be hard to find in this poem any trace of that pessimism or narrowed thought with which Southey, in his latter days, was charged. It is the work of a man who has indeed outgrown blatant juvenilities and uncontrolled passion, but to whom years have brought a deeper solemnity and tenderness, and a clearer, if sadder, knowledge of the complex mysteries of human life and sin.

It has been well said of Southey's minor works, by that most sympathetic critic, Professor Dowden, that they give admirable expression to that poetry of sober feeling so seldom found in lyric verse. They perhaps miss of that strange moving quality, that sharp agony of sweetness, which often feathers the arrow of a lyric poem, and drives it home, fire-tipped, to the heart. But if we sometimes feel the absence of that highest lyric impulse which can make some single mood immortal, there are yet to be found in Southey's ballads qualities of dramatic simplicity and clearness of conception, touched at times with pathos, but never overburdened by it. With these there is a certain vein of humour,

quaint and genial, which was a very vital part of Southey's nature, though it found best expression in that strange farrago of wit, and learning, and nonsense, "The Doctor," but also was sometimes indulged to a riotous extent in his letters. It is, however, in his meditative verse that Southey is seen at his best as a lyrist. The calm joy of the highest virtues, the peace of home loves, and the quiet sadness of age, resting from its labours, but looking for some deeper rest beyond—these are the themes of which he sings so simply and so well. And though his poetry is always absolutely free from the least mephitic taint or uncleanness, he cannot be charged with that dull and leaden respectability with which, clogged, the strongest-winged poet cannot soar. He keeps, for the most part, a serene and even way; and the land in which he dwells knows but seldom the fiercest sunlight and storms, or the blackest night; it is rather a land of peaceful afternoons, in which one looks back on life, and sees it to have been a rich and comely thing.

It is beyond our province to speak of Southey's work in prose, though it is there that his best work lies. As a historian, a biographer, a critic, he successively, and successfully, appears, and the qualities which are not wanting in his verse often find fuller and stronger play in his prose. But

it is Southey the poet who has been before us, and it is on him that the last word must be said. Let it be this :—

It may be true that as a poet Southey has taught us no new truth, given to our gaze no new world of feeling. He may not have set our feet on any new Pisgah, nor accomplished the task—which to some might have seemed grander than all these—of inventing a new metre, or adding to our stock of rhymes. But at least, so long as men care for the high and strong things of life, it shall be said of him that he corrupted no man's faith, nor weakened any in the doing of right ; that he set before his fellows a noble ideal of living, and with word and deed helped them to attain to that ideal ; that he taught them how gracious a thing is a life fulfilled of purity ; and that his message, spoken, it may be, with lips that sometimes faltered, was yet caught from that elder and greater poet who, to men wearily seeking the way of the highest life, bade only this—that they should do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.

17

SIDNEY R. THOMPSON.

Thalaba the Destroyer.

ARGUMENT.

It having been predicted that from the race of Hodeirah should come the destroyer of the magicians of the Domdaniel Cave, they murder Hodeirah and his children, Thalaba only escaping, who has been chosen by Heaven as the Destroyer of the Evil Sorcerers, and the Deliverer of the Earth.

IN the Domdaniel caverns,
Under the Roots of the Ocean,
Met the Masters of the Spell.
Before them in the vault,
Blazing unsuel'd from its floor of rock,
Ten magic flames arose.
"Burn, mystic fires;" Abdaldar cried;
"Burn while Hodeirah's dreaded race exist.
This is the appointed hour,
The hour that shall secure these dens of night."

"Dim they burn!" exclaim'd Lobaba;
"Dim they burn, and now they waver!
Okba lifts the arm of death:
They waver, . . . they go out?"

"Curse on his hasty hand!"
Khawla exclaim'd in wrath,
The woman-fiend exclaim'd,
"Curse on his hasty hand, the fool hath fail'd,
Eight only are gone out."

A Teraph stood against the cavern-side,
A new-born infant's head,
Which Khawla at its hour of birth had seized,
And from the shoulders wrung.
It stood upon a plate of gold,
An unclean Spirit's name inscrib'd beneath.
The cheeks were deathly dark,
Dark the dead skin upon the hairless skull ;
The lips were blueey pale ;
Only the eyes had life,
They gleam'd with demon light.

"Tell me !" quoth Khawla, "is the Fire gone out
That threatens the Masters of the Spell?"
The dead lips moved and spake,
"The Fire still burns that threatens
The Masters of the Spell."

"Curse on thee, Okba !" Khawla cried,
As to the den the Sorcerer came ;
He bore the dagger in his hand,
Red from the murder of Hodeirah's race.
"Behold those unextinguish'd flames !
The Fire still burns that threatens
The Masters of the Spell?
Okba, wert thou weak of heart?
Okba, wert thou blind of eye?
Thy fate and ours were on the lot,
And we believ'd the lying Stars.
That said thy hand might seize the auspicious hour !
Thou hast let slip the reins of Destiny, . . .
Curse thee, curse thee, Okba !"
The Murderer, answering, said,
"O versed in all enchanted lore,
Thou better knowest Okba's soul !
Eight blows I struck, eight home-driven blows,

Needed no second stroke
From this envenom'd blade.
Ye frown at me as if the will had fail'd ;
As if ye did not know
My double danger from Hodeirah's race,
The deeper hate I feel,
The stronger motive that inspir'd my arm !
Ye frown as if my hasty fault,
My ill-directed blow,
Had spared the enemy ;
And not the Stars that would not give,
And not your feeble spells
That could not force, the sign
Which of the whole was he.
Did ye not bid me strike them all ?
Said ye not root and branch should be destroy'd ?
I heard Hodeirah's dying groan,
I heard his Children's shriek of death,
And sought to consummate the work ;
But o'er the two remaining lives
A cloud unpierceable had risen,
A cloud that mock'd my searching eyes.
I would have probed it with the dagger-point,
The dagger was repell'd ;
A Voice came forth and said,
" Son of Perdition, cease ! Thou canst not change
What in the Book of Destiny is written."

Khawla to the Teraph turn'd,
" Tell me where the Prophet's hand
Hides our destined enemy ? "
The dead lips spake again,
" I view the seas, I view the land,
I search the Ocean and the Earth !
Not on Ocean is the Boy,
Not on Earth his steps are seen."

THALABA THE DESTROYER.

"A mightier power than we," Lobaba cried,
"Protects our destined foe.
Look ! look ! one Fire burns dim !
It quivers ! it goes out !"

It quiver'd, it was quench'd.
One Flame alone was left,
A pale blue Flame that trembled on the floor,
A hovering light, upon whose shrinking edge
The darkness seem'd to press.
Stronger it grew, and spread
Its lucid swell around,
Extending now where all the ten had stood
With lustre more than all.

Who shall seek through Araby
Hodeirah's dreaded son ?
They mingle the Arrows of Chance,
The lot of Abdaldar is drawn.
Thirteen moons must wax and wane
Ere the Sorcerer quit his quest.
He must visit every tribe
That roam the desert wilderness,
Or dwell beside perennial streams ;
Nor leave a solitary tent unsearch'd,
Till he hath found the Boy, . . .
The dreaded Boy, whose blood alone
Can quench that fated Fire.

A crystal ring Abdaldar wore ;
The powerful gem condensed
Primeval dews, that upon Caucasus
Felt the first winter's frost.
Ripening there it lay beneath
Rock above rock, and mountain ice up-piled
On mountain, till the incumbent mass assumed,
So huge its bulk, the Ocean's azure hue.

With this he sought the inner den
Where burnt the Eternal Fire.
Like waters gushing from some channell'd rock
Full through a narrow opening, from a chasm
The Eternal Fire stream'd up.
No eye beheld the spring
Of that up-flowing Flame,
Which blazed self-nurtured, and for ever, there.
It was no mortal element ; the Abyss
Supplied it, from the fountains at the first
Prepared. In the heart of earth it lives and glows
Her vital heat, till, at the day decreed,
The voice of God shall let its billows loose,
To deluge o'er with no abating flood
Our consummated World ;
Which must from that day in infinity
Through endless ages roll,
A penal orb of Fire.

Unturban'd and unsandal'd there,
Abdaldar stood before the Flame,
And held the Ring beside, and spake
The language that the Elements obey.
The obedient Flame detach'd a portion forth,
Which, in the crystal entering, was condensed,
Gem of the gem, its living Eye of fire.
When the hand that wears the spell
Shall touch the destined Boy,
Then shall that Eye be quench'd,
And the freed Element
Fly to its sacred and remember'd Spring.

Now go thy way, Abdaldar !
Servant of Eblis,
Over Arabia
Seek the Destroyer !

Over the sands of the scorching Tehama,
Over the waterless mountains of Najd ;
In Arud pursue him, and Yemen the happy,
And Hejaz, the country beloved by believers,
Over Arabia,
Servant of Eblis,
Seek the Destroyer !

From tribe to tribe, from town to town,
From tent to tent, Abdaldar pass'd.
Him every morn the all-beholding Eye
Saw from his couch, unhallow'd by a prayer,
Rise to the scent of blood ;
And every night lie down,
That rankling hope within him, that by day
Goaded his steps, still stinging him in sleep,
And startling him with vain accomplishment
From visions still the same.
Many a time his wary hand
To many a youth applied the Ring ;
And still the imprison'd Fire
Within its crystal socket lay comprest,
Impatient to be free.

At length to the cords of a tent,
That were stretch'd by an Island of Palms,
In the desolate sea of the sands,
The seemly traveller came.
Under a shapely palm,
Herself as shapely, there a Damsel stood ;
She held her ready robe,
And look'd towards a Boy,
Who from the tree above,
With one hand clinging to its trunk,
Cast with the other down the cluster'd dates.

The Magician approach'd the Tree,
He lean'd on his staff, like a way-faring man,
And the sweat of his travel was seen on his brow
He ask'd for food, and lo !

The Damsel proffers him her lap of dates ;
And the Stripling descends, and runs to the tent,
And brings him forth water, the draught of delight.

Anon the Master of the tent,
The Father of the family,
Came forth, a man in years, of aspect mild.
To the stranger approaching he gave
The friendly saluting of peace,
And bade the skin be spread.
Before the tent they spread the skin,
Under a Tamarind's shade,
That, bending forward, stretch'd
Its boughs of beauty far.

They brought the Traveller rice,
With no false colours tinged to tempt the eye,
But white as the new-fallen snow,
When never yet the sullyng Sun
Hath seen its purity,
Nor the warm zepnyr touch'd and tainted it
The dates of the grove before their guest
They laid, and the luscious fig,
And water from the well.

The Damsel from the Tamarind tree
Had pluck'd its acid fruit,
And steep'd it in water long ;
And whoso drank of the cooling draught,
He would not wish for wine.

This to their guest the Damsel brought,
And a modest pleasure kindled her cheek,
When raising from the cup his moisten'd lips,
The stranger smiled, and praised, and drank again.

Whither is gone the Boy?
He had pierced the Melon's pulp,
And closed with wax the wound,
And he had duly gone at morn
And watch'd its ripening rind,
And now all joyfully he brings
The treasure now matured;
His dark eyes sparkling with a boy's delight,
As out he pours its liquid lusciousness,
And proffers to the guest.

Abdaldar ate, and he was satisfied :
And now his tongue discoursed
Of regions far remote,
As one whose busy feet had travell'd long.
The father of the family,
With a calm eye and quiet smile,
Sate pleased to hearken him.
The Damsel who removed the meal,
She loiter'd on the way,
And listen'd with full hands
A moment motionless.

All eagerly the Boy
Watches the Traveller's lips ;
And still the wily man
With seemly kindness, to the eager Boy
Directs his winning tale.
Ah, curs'd one ! if this be he,

If thou hast found the object of thy search,
Thy hate, thy bloody aim, . . .
Into what deep damnation wilt thou plunge
Thy miserable soul ! . . .

Look ! how his eye delighted watches thine ! . . .

Look ! how his open lips
Gape at the winning tale ! . . .
And nearer now he comes,
To lose no word of that delightful talk.
Then, as in familiar mood,
Upon the stripling's arm
The Sorcerer laid his hand,
And the Fire of the Crystal fled.

While the sudden shoot of joy
Made pale Abdaldar's cheek,
The Master's voice was heard ;
" It is the hour of prayer, . . .
My children, let us purify ourselves,
And praise the Lord our God ! "
The Boy the water brought ;
After the law they purified themselves,
And bent their faces to the earth in prayer.

All, save Abdaldar ; over Thalaba
He stands, and lifts the dagger to destroy.
Before his lifted arm received
Its impulse to descend,
The Blast of the Desert came.
Prostrate in prayer, the pious family
Felt not the Simoon pass.
They rose, and lo ! the Sorcerer lying dead,
Holding the dagger in his blasted hand.

BOOK THE THIRD.

Thalaba has drawn the ring from the dead magician's hand,
and placed it on his own, dedicating its powers to God.

AT midnight Thalaba started up,
For he felt that the ring on his finger was moved ;
He call'd on Allah aloud,
And he call'd on the Prophet's name.
Moath arose in alarm ;
"What ails thee, Thalaba ?" he cried,
"Is the robber of night at hand ?"
"Dost thou not see," the youth exclaim'd,
"A Spirit in the tent ?"
Moath look'd round and said,
"The moonbeam shines in the tent,
I see thee stand in the light,
And thy shadow is black on the ground."

Thalaba answer'd not.
"Spirit !" he cried, "what brings thee here ?
In the name of the Prophet, speak,
In the name of Allah, obey !"

He ceased, and there was silence in the tent.
"Dost thou not hear ?" quoth Thalaba ;
The listening man replied,
"I hear the wind, that flaps
The curtain of the tent."

"The Ring ! the Ring !" the youth exclaim'd.
"For that the Spirit of Evil comes ;
By that I see, by that I hear.
In the name of God, I ask thee,
Who was he that slew my Father ?"

THALABA THE DESTROYER.

11

DEMON.

Master of the powerful Ring !
Okba, the dread Magician, did the deed.

THALABA.

Where does the Murderer dwell ?

DEMON.

In the Domdaniel caverns,
Under the Roots of the Ocean.

THALABA.

Why were my Father and my brethren slain ?

DEMON.

We knew from the race of Hodeirah
The destined Destroyer would come.

THALABA.

Bring me my father's sword !

DEMON.

A Fire surrounds the fatal sword ;
No Spirit of Magician's hand
Can pierce that fated Flame.

THALABA.

Bring me his bow and his arrows !

Distinctly Moath heard the youth, and She
Who, through the Veil of Separation, watch'd
The while in listening terror, and suspense
All too intent for prayer.

They heard the voice of Thalaba ;
But when the Spirit spake, the motionless air
Felt not the subtile sounds,
Too fine for mortal sense.

On a sudden the rattle of arrows was heard,
And a quiver was laid at the feet of the youth,
And in his hand they saw Hodeirah's bow.
He eyed the bow, he twang'd the string,
And his heart bounded to the joyous tone.
Anon he raised his voice and cried,
" Go thy way, and never more,
Evil spirit, haunt our tent !
By the virtue of the Ring,
By Mahommed's holier might,
By the holiest name of God,
Thee, and all the Powers of Hell,
I adjure and I command
Never more to trouble us ! "

Nor ever from that hour
Did rebel Spirit on the tent intrude :
Such virtue had the Spell.

Thus peacefully the vernal years
Of Thalaba passed on,
Till now, without an effort, he could bend
Hodeirah's stubborn bow.
Black were his eyes and bright,
The sunny hue of health
Glow'd on his tawny cheek,
His lip was darken'd by maturing life ;
Strong were his shapely limbs, his stature tall ;
Peerless among Arabian youths was he.

One morn, as was their wont, in sportive mood,
The youth and damsel bent Hodeirah's bow ;
For with no feeble hand, nor erring aim,
Oneiza could let loose the obedient shaft.

With head back-bending, Thalaba
Shot up the aimless arrow high in air,
Whose line in vain the aching sight pursued,
Lost in the depth of Heaven.

"When will the hour arrive," exclaim'd the youth,

"That I shall aim these fated shafts

To vengeance long delay'd ?

Have I not strength, my father, for the deed ?

Or can the will of Providence

Be mutable like man ?

Shall I never be call'd to the task ?"

"Impatient boy !" quoth Moath, with a smile :

"Impatient Thalaba !" Oneiza cried,

And she too smiled ; but in her smile

A mild reproachful melancholy mix'd.

Then Moath pointed where a cloud
Of locusts, from the desolated fields

Of Syria wing'd their way.

"Lo ! how created things

Obeys the written doom !"

Onward they came, a dark continuous cloud
Of congregated myriads numberless,
The rushing of whose wings was as the sound
Of some broad river, headlong in its course
Plunged from a mountain summit ; or the roar
Of a wild ocean in the autumnal storm,

Shattering its billows on a shore of rocks.
Onward they came, the winds impell'd them on,
Their work was done, their path of ruin past,
Their graves were ready in the wilderness.

“Behold the mighty army !” Moath cried,
“Blindly they move, impell'd
By the blind Element.

And yonder birds our welcome visitants,
See ! where they soar above the embodied host,
Pursue their way, and hang upon the rear,
And thin the spreading flanks,
Rejoicing o'er their banquet ! Deemest thou
The scent of water on some Syrian mosque
Placed with priest-mummery and fantastic rites
Which fool the multitude, hath led them here
From far Khorassan ? Allah who appoints
Yon swarms to be a punishment of man,
These also hath he doom'd to meet their way :
Both passive instruments
Of his all-acting will,
Sole mover He, and only spring of all.”

While thus he spake, Oneiza's eye looks up
Where one toward her flew,
Satiated, for so it seem'd, with sport and food.
The Bird flew over her,
And as he pass'd above,
From his relaxing grasp a Locust fell ; . . .
It fell upon the Maiden's robe,
And feebly there it stood, recovering slow.

The admiring girl survey'd
His outspread sails of green ;
His gauzy underwings,
One closely to the grass-green body furl'd,

One ruffled in the fall, and half unclosed.
She view'd his jet-orb'd eyes,
His glossy gorget bright,
Green glittering in the sun ;
His plummy pliant horns,
That, nearer as she gazed,
Bent tremblingly before her breath.
She mark'd his yellow-circled front
With lines mysterious vein'd ;
And " know'st thou what is here inscribed,
My father ? " said the Maid.
" Look, Thalaba ! perchance these lines
Are in the letters of the Ring,
Nature's own language written here. "

The youth bent down, and suddenly
He started, and his heart
Sprung, and his cheek grew red,
For these mysterious lines were legible, . .
WHEN THE SUN SHALL BE DARKENED AT NOON,
SON OF HODEIRAH, DEPART.
And Moath look'd, and read the lines aloud ;
The Locust shook his wings and fled,
And they were silent all.

Who then rejoiced but Thalaba ?
Who then was troubled but the Arabian Maid ?
And Moath sad of heart,
Though with a grief suppress, beheld the youth
Sharpen his arrows now,
And now new-plume their shafts,
Now, to beguile impatient hope,
Feel every sharpen'd point.

" Why is that anxious look, " Oneiza ask'd,
" Still upward cast at noon ?

Is Thalaba aweary of our tent ?”
“ I would be gone,” the youth replied,
“ That I might do my task,
And full of glory to the tent return,
Whence I should part no more.”

But on the noontide sun,
As anxious and as oft, Oneiza’s eye
Was upward glanced in fear.
And now, as Thalaba replied, her cheek
Lost its fresh and lively hue ;
For in the Sun’s bright edge
She saw, or thought she saw, a little speck.
The sage Astronomer
Who, with the love of science full,
Trembled that day at every passing cloud, . . .
He had not seen it, ’twas a speck so small.

Alas ! Oneiza sees the spot increase !
And lo ! the ready youth
Over his shoulder the full quiver slings,
And grasps the slacken’d bow.
It spreads, and spreads, and now
Hath shadow’d half the sun,
Whose crescent pointed horns
Now momentarily decrease.

The day grows dark, the birds retire to rest :
Forth from her shadowy haunt
Flies the large-headed screamer of the night.
Far off the affrighted African,
Deeming his God deceased,
Falls on his knees in prayer,
And trembles as he sees
The fierce hyena’s eyes
Glare in the darkness of that dreadful noon.

Then Thalaba exclaim'd, "Farewell,
My father ! my Oneiza !" the Old Man
Felt his throat swell with grief.
"Where wilt thou go, my child?" he cried,
"Wilt thou not wait a sign
To point thy destined way?"
"God will conduct me !" said the faithful youth.
He said, and from the tent,
In the depth of the darkness departed.
They heard his parting steps,
The quiver rattling as he pass'd away.

BOOK THE FIFTH.

Directed by the spirit of his mother, who appears to him
in a vision, Thalaba seeks the ruins of Babylon, to learn
from the Fallen Angels, there imprisoned, the talisman
required for his task.

RECLINED against a column's broken shaft,
Unknowing whitherward to bend his way,
He stood, and gazed around.
The Ruins closed him in ;
It seem'd as if no foot of man
For ages had intruded there.

Soon at approaching step
Startling, he turn'd and saw
A Warrior in the moonbeam drawing near.
Forward the Stranger came,
And with a curious eye
Perused the Arab youth.

"And who art thou," the Stranger cried,
"That at an hour like this

Wanderest in Babylon ?
A way-bewilder'd traveller, seekest thou
The ruinous shelter here ?
Or comest thou to hide
The plunder of the night ?
Or hast thou spells to make
These ruins, yawning from their rooted base,
Disclose the secret wealth ? ”

The youth replied, “ Nor wandering traveller,
Nor robber of the night,
Nor skill'd in spells am I.
I seek the Angels here,
Haruth and Maruth. Stranger, in thy turn,
Why wanderest thou in Babylon,
And who art thou, the questioner ? ”

The man was fearless, and the temper'd pride
Which toned the voice of Thalaba
Displeased not him, himself of haughty heart.
Heedless he answered, “ Knowest thou
Their cave of punishment ? ”

THALABA.

Vainly I seek it.

STRANGER.

Art thou firm of foot
To tread the ways of danger ?

THALABA.

Point the path !

STRANGER.

Young Arab ! if thou hast a heart can beat
Evenly in danger ; if thy bowels yearn not

With human fears, at scenes where undisgraced
The soldier tried in battle might look back
And tremble, follow me ! . . . for I am bound
Into that cave of horrors.

Thalaba

Gazed on his comrade : he was young, of port
Stately and strong ; belike his face had pleased
A woman's eye ; but the youth read in it
Unrestrain'd passions, the obdurate soul
Bold in all evil daring ; and it taught,
By nature's irresistible instinct, doubt
Well-timed and wary. Of himself assured,
Fearless of man, and firm in faith,
"Lead on !" cried Thalaba.
Mohareb led the way ;
And through the ruin'd streets,
And through the farther gate,
They pass'd in silence on.

There pausing at the cavern-mouth,
Mohareb turn'd to Thalaba :
"Now darest thou enter in ?"
"Behold !" the youth replied,
And leading in his turn the dangerous way,
Set foot within the cave.

"Stay, Madman !" cried his comrade : "Wouldst thou
rush
Headlong to certain death ?
Where are thine arms to meet
The Keeper of the Passage ?" A loud shriek,
That shook along the windlings of the cave,
Scatter'd the youth's reply.

Mohareb, when the long re-echoing ceased,
Exclaim'd, " Fate favour'd thee,
Young Arab ! when she wrote upon thy brow
The meeting of to-night ;
Else surely had thy name
This hour been blotted from the Book of Life ! "

So saying, from beneath
His cloak a bag he drew :
" Young Arab ! thou art brave," he cried,
" But thus to rush on danger unprepared,
As lions spring upon the hunter's spear,
Is blind, brute courage. Zohak keeps the cave
Against that Giant of primeval days :
No force can win the passage." Thus he said,
And from his wallet drew a human hand,
Shrivell'd and dry and black ;
And fitting as he spake
A taper in his hold,
Pursued : " A murderer on the stake had died !
I drove the Vulture from his limbs, and lopt
The hand that did the murder, and drew up
The tendon-strings to close its grasp,
And in the sun and wind
Parch'd it, nine weeks exposed.
The Taper, . . . but not here the place to impart,
Nor hast thou undergone the rites,
That fit thee to partake the mystery.
Look ! it burns clear, but with the air around,
Its dead ingredients mingle deathiness.
This when the Keeper of the Cave shall feel,
Maugre the doom of Heaven,
The salutary spell
Shall lull his penal agony to sleep,
And leave the passage free."

Thalaba answer'd not.
Nor was there time for answer now,
For lo ! Mohareb leads,
And o'er the vaulted cave,
Trembles the accursed taper's feeble light.
There where the narrowing chasm
Rose loftier in the hill,
Stood Zohak, wretched man, condemn'd to keep
His Cave of punishment.
His was the frequent scream
Which when far off the prowling Jackal heard,
He howl'd in terror back :
For from his shoulders grew
Two snakes of monster size,
Which ever at his head
Aim'd their rapacious teeth
To satiate raving hunger with his brain.
He, in the eternal conflict, oft would seize
Their swelling necks, and in his giant grasp
Bruise them, and rend their flesh with bloody nails,
And howl for agony,
Feeling the pangs he gave, for of himself
Co-sentient and inseparable parts,
The snaky torturers grew.

To him approaching now,
Mohareb held the wither'd arm,
The taper of enchanted power.
The unhallow'd spell in hand unholy held,
Then minister'd to mercy ; heavily
The wretch's eyelids closed ;
And welcome and unfelt,
Like the release of death,
A sudden sleep surprised his vital powers.

And now before their path
The opening cave dilates ;
They reach a spacious vault,
Where the black river-fountains burst their way.
Now as a whirlwind's force
Had center'd on the spring,
The gushing flood roll'd up ;
And now the deaden'd roar
Echoed beneath, collapsing as it sunk
Within a dark abyss,
Adown whose fathomless gulphs the eye was lost.

" Here," quoth Mohareb, " do the Angels dwell,
The Teachers of Enchantment." Thalaba
Then raised his voice, and cried,
" Haruth and Maruth, hear me ! Not with rites
Accursed, to disturb your penitence,
And learn forbidden lore,
Repentant Angels, seek I your abode ;
But sent by Allah and the Prophet here,
Obediently I come,
Their chosen servant I,
Tell me the Talisman "—

" And dost thou think,"
Mohareb cried, as with a smile of scorn
He glanced upon his comrade, " dost thou think
To trick them of their secret ? For the dupes
Of human-kind keep this lip-righteousness !
'Twill serve thee in the Mosque
And in the Market-place,
But Spirits view the heart.
Only by strong and torturing spells enforced,
Those stubborn angels teach the charm
By which we must descend."

"Descend?" said Thalaba.
 But then the wrinkling smile
 Forsook Mohareb's cheek,
 And darker feelings settled on his brow.
 "Now by my soul," quoth he, "and I believe,
 Idiot! that I have led
 Some camel-knee'd prayer-monger through the cave!
 What brings thee hither? Thou should'st have a hut
 By some Saint's grave beside the public way,
 There to less-knowing fools
 Retail thy Koran-scrap,
 And in thy turn die civet-like at last
 In the dung-perfume of thy sanctity! . . .
 Ye whom I seek! that, led by me,
 Feet uninitiate tread
 Your threshold, this atones!—
 Fit sacrifice he falls!"
 And forth he flash'd his scymetar,
 And raised the murderous blow.

There ceased his power; his lifted arm,
 Suspended by the spell,
 Hung impotent to strike.
 "Poor hypocrite!" cried he,
 "And this then is thy faith
 In Allah and the Prophet! They had fail'd
 To save thee, but for Magic's stolen aid;
 Yea, they had left thee yonder Serpent's meal;
 But that, in prudent cowardice,
 The chosen Servant of the Lord came in,
 Safe follower of my path!"

"Blasphemer! dost thou boast of guiding me?"
 Quoth Thalaba, with virtuous pride inflamed,
 "Blindly the wicked work
 The righteous will of Heaven!"

Sayest thou that diffident of God,
In Magic spells I trust?
Liar ! let witness this !"
And he drew off Abdaldar's Ring,
And cast it in the gulph.
A skinny hand came up,
And caught it as it fell,
And peals of devilish laughter shook the Cave.

Then Joy suffused Mohareb's cheek,
And Thalaba beheld
The blue blade gleam, descending to destroy.

The undefended youth
Sprung forward, and he seized
Mohareb in his grasp,
And grappled with him breast to breast.
Sinewy and large of limb Mohareb was,
Broad-shoulder'd, and his joints
Knit firm, and in the strife
Of danger practised well.
Time had not thus matured young Thalaba ;
But high-wrought feeling now,
The inspiration and the mood divine,
Infused a force portentous, like the strength
Of madness through his frame.
Mohareb reels before him ; he right on,
With knee, with breast, with arm,
Presses the staggering foe ;
And now upon the brink
Of that tremendous spring, . . .
There with fresh impulse and a rush of force,
He thrust him from his hold.
The upwhirling flood received
Mohareb, then, absorb'd,
Engulph'd him in the abyss.

Thalaba's breath came fast,
 And panting, he breath'd out
 A broken prayer of thankfulness.
 At length he spake and said,
 "Haruth and Maruth ! are ye here ?
 Or hath that evil guide misled my search ?
 I, Thalaba, the Servant of the Lord,
 Invoke you. Hear me, Angels ! so may Heaven
 Accept and mitigate your penitence.
 I go to root from earth the Sorcerer brood,
 Tell me the needful Talisman !"

Thus as he spake, recumbent on the rock
 Beyond the black abyss,
 Their forms grew visible.
 A settled sorrow sate upon their brows, . . .
 Sorrow alone, for trace of guilt and shame
 None now remain'd ; and gradual as by prayer
 The sin was purged away,
 Their robe of glory, purified of stain,
 Resumed the lustre of its native light.

In awe the youth received the answering voice,
 "Son of Hodeirah ! thou hast proved it here ;
 The Talisman is Faith."

BOOK THE SIXTH.

Outside the cavern a horse waits for him, and bears him,
 unguided, to a strange and lovely land.

THIS was a wild and wondrous scene,
 Strange and beautiful, as where
 By Oton-tala, like a sea of stars.
 The hundred sources of Hoangho burst.

High mountains closed the vale,
Bare rocky mountains, to all living things
Inhospitable ; on whose sides no herb
Rooted, no insect fed, no bird awoke
Their echoes, save the Eagle, strong of wing,
A lonely plunderer, that afar
Sought in the vales his prey.

Thither toward those mountains Thalaba
Following, as he believed, the path prescribed
By Destiny, advanced.
Up a wide vale that led into their depths,
A stony vale between receding heights
Of stone, he wound his way.
A cheerless place ! the solitary Bee,
Whose buzzing was the only sound of life.
Flew there on restless wing.
Seeking in vain one flower, whereon to fix.

Still Thalaba holds on ;
The winding vale now narrows on his view,
And steeper of ascent,
Rightward and leftward rise the rocks,
And now they meet across the vale.
Was it the toil of human hands
Had hewn a passage in the rock,
Through whose rude portal-way
The light of heaven was seen ?
Rude and low the portal-way ;
Beyond, the same ascending straits
Went winding up the wilds.

Still a bare, silent, solitary glen,
A fearful silence, and a solitude
That made itself be felt ;
And steeper now the ascent,

A rugged path, that tired
The straining muscles, toiling slowly up.
At length again a rock
Stretch'd o'er the narrow vale ;
There also had a portal-way been hewn,
But gates of massy iron barr'd the pass,
Huge, solid, heavy-hinged.

There hung a horn beside the gate,
Ivory-tipt and brazen-mouth'd ;
He took the ivory tip,
And through the brazen-mouth he breath'd ;
Like a long thunder-peal,
From rock to rock rebounding rung the blast ;
The gates of iron, by no human arm
Unfolded, turning on their hinges slow,
Disclosed the passage of the rock.
He enter'd, and the iron gates fell to,
And with a clap like thunder closed him in.

It was a narrow winding way ;
Dim lamps suspended from the vault,
Lent to the gloom an agitated light.
Winding it pierced the rock,
A long descending path
By gates of iron closed ;
There also hung a horn beside
Of ivory tip and brazen mouth ;
And he took the ivory tip,
And gave the brazen mouth its voice again.
Not now in thunder spake the horn,
But breathed a sweet and thrilling melody :
The gates flew open, and a flood of light
Rush'd on his dazzled eyes.

Was it to earthly Eden, lost so long,
The fated Youth had found his wondrous way?
But earthly Eden boasts
No terraced palaces,
No rich pavilions bright with woven gold,
Like these that in the vale
Rise amid odorous groves.
The astonish'd Thalaba,
Doubting as though an unsubstantial dream
Beguiled him, closed his eyes,
And open'd them again;
And yet uncertified,
He prest them close, and as he look'd around
Question'd the strange reality again.
He did not dream;
They still were there,
The glittering tents,
The odorous groves,
The gorgeous palaces.

And lo ! a man, reverend in comely age,
Advancing greets the youth.
"Favour'd of Fortune," thus he said, "go taste
The joys of Paradise !
The reinless steed that ranges o'er the world,
Brings hither those alone for lofty deeds
Mark'd by their horoscope ; permitted thus
A foretaste of the full beatitude,
That in heroic acts they may go on
More ardent, eager to return and reap
Endless enjoyment here, their destined meed.
Favour'd of Fortune thou, go taste
The joys of Paradise !"

This said, he turn'd away, and left
The Youth in wonder mute ;

For Thalaba stood mute,
And passively received
The mingled joy which flow'd on every sense.
Where'er his eye could reach,
Fair structures, rainbow-hued, arose ;
And rich pavilions through the opening woods
Gleam'd from their waving curtains sunny gold ;
And winding through the verdant vale,
Went streams of liquid light ;
And fluted cypresses rear'd up
Their living obelisks ;
And broad-leav'd plane-trees in long colonnades
O'er-arch'd delightful walks,
Where round their trunks the thousand tendrill'd vine
Wound up and hung the boughs with greener wreaths,
And clusters not their own.
Wearied with endless beauty, did his eyes
Return for rest ? beside him teems the earth
With tulips, like the ruddy evening streak'd ;
And here the lily hangs her head of snow ;
And here amid her sable cup
Shines the red-eye spot, like one brightest star,
The solitary twinkler of the night ;
And here the rose expands
Her paradise of leaves.

Then on his ear what sounds
Of harmony arose !
Far music and the distance-mellow'd song
From bowers of merriment ;
The waterfall remote ;
The murmuring of the leafy groves ;
The single nightingale
Perch'd in the rosier by, so richly toned,
That never from that most melodious bird,
Singing a love-song to his brooding mate,

THALABA THE DESTROYER.

Did Thracian shepherd by the grave
Of Orpheus hear a sweeter melody,
Though there the Spirit of the Sepulchre
All his own power infuse, to swell
The incense that he loves,

And oh ! what odours the voluptuous vale
Scatters from jasmine bowers,
From yon rose wilderness,
From cluster'd henna and from orange groves,
That with such perfumes fill the breeze,
As Peris to their Sister bear,
When from the summit of some lofty tree
She hangs encaged, the captive of the Dives.
They from their pinions shake
The sweetness of celestial flowers,
And, as her enemies impure
From that impervious poison far away
Fly groaning with the torment, she the while
Inhales her fragrant food.

Such odours flow'd upon the world,
When, at Mohammed's nuptials, word
Went forth in Heaven, to roll
The everlasting gates of Paradise
Back on their living hinges, that its gales
Might visit all below ; the general bliss
Thrill'd every bosom, and the family
Of man, for once, partook one common joy.

Full of the bliss, yet still awake
To wonder, on went Thalaba ;
On every side the song of mirth,
The music of festivity,
nvite the passing youth.

Wearied at length with hunger and with heat,
He enters in a banquet room,
Where round a fountain brink,
On silken carpets sate the festive train.
Instant through all his frame
Delightful coolness spread ;
The playing fount refresh'd
The agitated air ;
The very light came cool'd through silvering panes
Of pearly shell, like the pale moonbeam tinged ;
Or where the wine-vase fill'd the aperture,
Rosy as rising morn, or softer gleam
Of saffron, like the sunny evening mist :
Through every hue, and streak'd by all,
The flowing fountain play'd.
Around the water-edge
Vessels of wine, alternate placed,
Ruby and amber, tinged its little waves.
From golden goblets there
The guests sate quaffing the delicious juice
Of Shiraz' golden grape.

But Thalaba took not the draught ;
For rightly he knew had the Prophet forbidden
That beverage, the mother of sins.
Nor did the urgent guests
Proffer a second time the liquid fire,
When in the youth's strong eye they saw
No moveable resolve.
Yet not uncourteous, Thalaba
Drank the cool draught of innocence,
That fragrant from its dewy vase
Came purer than it left its native bed ;
And he partook the odorous fruits,
For all rich fruits were there ;

Water-melons rough of rind,
Whose pulp the thirsty lip
Dissolved into a draught ;
Pistachios from the heavy-cluster'd trees
Of Malavert, or Haleb's fertile soil ;
And Casbin's luscious grapes of amber hue,
That many a week endure
The summer sun intense,
Till by its powerful heat
All watery particles exhaled, alone
The strong essential sweetness ripens there.
Here cased in ice the apricot,
A topaz, crystal-set :
Here, on a plate of snow,
The sunny orange rests ;
And still the aloes and the sandal-wood,
From golden censers, o'er the banquet room
Diffuse their dying sweets.

Anon a troop of females form'd the dance,
Their ankles bound with bracelet-bells,
That made the modulating harmony.
Transparent garments to the greedy eye
Exposed their harlot limbs,
Which moved, in every wanton gesture skill'd.

With earnest eyes the banqueters
Fed on the sight impure ;
And Thalaba, he gazed,
But in his heart he bore a talisman,
Whose blessed alchemy
To virtuous thoughts refined
The loose suggestions of the scene impure.
Oneiza's image swam before his sight,
His own Arabian Maid.

He rose, and from the banquet room he rush'd,
Tears coursed his burning cheek ;
And nature for a moment woke the thought,
And murmur'd, that, from all domestic joys
Estranged, he wander'd o'er the world
A lonely being, far from all he loved.
Son of Hodeirah, not among the crimes
That momentary murmur shall be written !

From tents of revelry,
From festal bowers, to solitude he ran ;
And now he came where all the rills
Of that well-water'd garden in one tide
Roll'd their collected waves.
A straight and stately bridge
Stretch'd its long arches o'er the ample stream.
Strong in the evening and distinct its shade
Lay on the watery mirror, and his eye
Saw it united with its parent pile,
One huge fantastic fabric. Drawing near,
Loud from the chambers of the bridge below,
Sounds of carousal came and song,
And unveil'd women bade the advancing youth
Come merry-make with them !
Unhearing, or unheeding, he
Pass'd o'er with hurried pace,
And sought the shade and silence of the grove.

Deserts of Araby !
His soul return'd to you.
He cast himself upon the earth,
And closed his eyes and call'd
The voluntary vision up.
A cry, as of distress,
Aroused him ; loud it came and near !

He started up, he strung his bow,
He pluck'd an arrow forth.
Again a shriek . . . a woman's shriek !
And lo ! she rushes through the trees,
Her veil is rent, her garments torn !
The ravisher follows close.
“ Prophet, save me ! save me, God !
Help ! help me, man ! ” to Thalaba she cried ;
Thalaba drew the bow.
The unerring arrow did its work of death.
Then turning to the woman, he beheld
His own Oneiza, his Arabian Maid.

BOOK THE SEVENTH.

Having learned the wiles by which Oneiza has been enticed into the enchanted land, Thalaba resolves to destroy its kings.

RADIANT with gems upon his throne of gold
Sate Aloadin ; o'er the Sorcerer's head
Hover'd a Bird and in the fragrant air
Waved his wide winnowing wings,
A living canopy.
Large as the hairy Cassowar
Was that o'ershadowing Bird ;
So huge his talons, in their grasp
The Eagle would have hung a helpless prey.
His beak was iron, and his plumes
Glitter'd like burnish'd gold,
And his eyes glow'd, as though an inward fire
Shone through a diamond orb.

The blinded multitude
Adored the Sorcerer,
And bent the knee before him,
And shouted forth his praise ;
“Mighty art thou, the bestower of joy,
The Lord of Paradise !”
Then Aloadin rose and waved his hand,
And they stood mute, and moveless,
In idolising awe.

“Children of Earth,” he said,
“Whom I have guided here
By easier passage than the gate of Death,
The infidel Sultan, to whose lands
My mountains stretch their roots,
Blasphemes and threatens me.
Strong are his armies, many are his guards,
Yet may a dagger find him.
Children of Earth, I tempt ye not
With the vain promise of a bliss unseen,
With tales of a hereafter Heaven,
Whence never Traveller hath return'd !
Have ye not tasted of the cup of joy
That in these groves of happiness
For ever over-mantling tempts
The ever-thirsty lip ?
Who is there here that by a deed
Of danger will deserve
The eternal joys of actual Paradise ?”

“I !” Thalaba exclaim'd ;
And springing forward, on the Sorcerer's head
He dash'd his knotty club,

Aloadin fell not, though his skull
Was shattered by the blow,

For by some talisman
His miserable life imprison'd still
Dwelt in the body. The astonish'd crowd
Stand motionless with fear,
Expecting to behold
Immediate vengeance from the wrath of Heaven.
And lo ! the Bird . . . the monster Bird,
Soars up . . . then pounces down
To seize on Thalaba !
Now, Oneiza, bend the bow,
Now draw the arrow home ! . . .
True fled the arrow from Oneiza's hand ;
It pierc'd the monster Bird,
It broke the talisman, . . .
Then darkness cover'd all, . . .
Earth shook, Heaven thunder'd, and amid the yells
Of evil Spirits perished
The Paradise of Sin.

At last the earth was still ;
The yelling of the Demons ceased !
Opening the wreck and ruin to their sight,
The darkness roll'd away. Alone in life,
Amid the desolation and the dead,
Stood the Destroyer and the Arabian Maid.
They look'd around, the rocks were rent,
The path was open, late by magic closed ;
Awe-struck and silent down the stony glen
They wound their thoughtful way.

Amid the vale below
Tents rose, and streamers play'd,
And javelins sparkled to the sun ;
And multitudes encamp'd
Swarm'd, far as eye could travel o'er the plain.
There in his war pavilion sate

In council with his Chiefs
The Sultan of the Land.
Before his presence there a Captain led
Oneiza and the Appointed Youth.

"Obedient to our Lord's command," said he,
"We pass'd toward the mountains, and began
The ascending strait ; when suddenly Earth shook,
And darkness, like the midnight, fell around,
And fire and thunder came from Heaven,
As though the Retribution-day were come.
After the terror ceased, and when with hearts
Somewhat assured, again we ventured on,
This youth and woman met us on the way.
They told us, that from Aloadin's hold
They came, on whom the judgment stroke hath fallen,
He and his sinful Paradise at once
Destroy'd by them, the agents they of Heaven.
Therefore I brought them hither to repeat
The tale before thy presence ; that as search
Shall prove it false or faithful, to their merit
Thou mayest reward them."
"Be it done to us,"
Thalaba answer'd, "as the truth shall prove !"

The Sultan while he spake
Fix'd on him the proud eye of sovereignty ;
"If thou hast play'd with us,
By Allah and by Ali, Death shall seal
The lying lips for ever ! But if the thing
Be as thou say'st, Arabian, thou shalt stand
Next to ourself !" . . .
Hark ! while he speaks, the cry,
The lengthening cry, the increasing shout
Of joyful multitudes !
Breathless and panting to the tent

The bearer of good tidings comes,
"O Sultan, live for ever ! be thy foes
Like Aloadin all !
The wrath of God hath smitten him."

Joy at the welcome tale
Shone in the Sultan's cheek ;
" Array the Arabian in the robe
Of honour," he exclaim'd,
" And place a chain of gold around his neck,
And bind around his brow the diadem,
And mount him on my steed of state,
And lead him through the camp,
And let the Heralds go before and cry,
Thus shall the Sultan reward
The man who serves him well !"

Then in the purple robe
They vested Thalaba,
And hung around his neck the golden chain,
And bound his forehead with the diadem,
And on the royal steed
They led him through the camp,
And Heralds went before and cried,
" Thus shall the Sultan reward
The man who serves him well !"

When from the pomp of triumph
And presence of the King,
Thalaba sought the tent allotted him,
Thoughtful the Arabian Maid beheld
His animated eye,
His cheek inflamed with pride.
" Oneiza !" cried the youth,
" The King hath done according to his word,
And made me in the land

Next to himself be named ! . . .
But why that serious melancholy smile ? . . .
Oneiza, when I heard the voice that gave me
Honour, and wealth, and fame, the instant thought
Arose to fill my joy, that thou would'st hear
The tidings, and be happy."

ONEIZA.

Thalaba,
Thou would'st not have me mirthful ! Am I not
An orphan, . . . among strangers ?

THALABA.

But with me !

ONEIZA.

My Father !

THALABA.

Nay, be comforted ! Last night
To what wert thou exposed ! in what a peril
The morning found us ! . . . safety, honour, wealth,
These now are ours. This instant who thou wert
The Sultan ask'd. I told him from our childhood
We had been plighted ; . . . was I wrong, Oneiza ?
And when he said with bounties he would heap
Our nuptials, . . . wilt thou blame me if I blest
His will, that bade me fix the marriage day ! . . .
In tears, my love ? . . .

ONEIZA.

REMEMBER, DESTINY
HATH MARK'D THEE FROM MANKIND !

THALABA.

Perhaps when Aloadin was destroy'd
The mission ceased ; and therefore Providence
With its rewards and blessings strews my path:
Thus for the accomplish'd service.

ONEIZA.

Thalaba !

THALABA.

Or if haply not, yet whither should I go ?
Is it not prudent to abide in peace
Till I am summon'd ?

ONEIZA.

Take me to the Deserts !

THALABA.

But Moath is not there ; and would'st thou dwell
In a stranger's tent ? thy father then might seek
In long and fruitless wandering for his child.

ONEIZA.

Take me then to Mecca !
There let me dwell a servant of the Temple.
Bind thou thyself my veil, . . . to human eye
It never shall be lifted. There, whilst thou
Shalt go upon thine enterprise, my prayers,
Dear Thalaba ! shall rise to succour thee,
And I shall live, . . . if not in happiness,
Surely in hope.

THALABA.

Oh think of better things !
 The will of Heaven is plain ! by wondrous ways
 It led us here, and soon the common voice
 Will tell what we have done, and how we dwell
 Under the shadow of the Sultan's wing ;
 So shall thy father hear the fame, and find us
 What he hath wish'd us ever . . . Still in tears !
 Still that unwilling eye ! nay . . . nay . . . Oneiza . . .
 My wedded wife. Honour and gratitude
 As yet preserve the Sultan from all thoughts
 That sin against thee ; but so sure as Heaven
 Hath gifted thee above all other maids
 With loveliness, so surely would those thoughts
 Of wrong arise within the heart of Power.
 If thou art mine, Oneiza, we are safe,
 But else, there is no sanctuary could save.

ONEIZA.

Thalaba ! Thalaba !

With song, with music, and with dance,
 The bridal pomp proceeds.
 Following the deep-veil'd Bride
 Fifty female slaves attend
 In costly robes that gleam
 With interwoven gold,
 And sparkle far with gems.
 An hundred slaves behind them bear
 Vessels of silver and vessels of gold,
 And many a gorgeous garment gay,
 The presents that the Sultan gave.
 On either hand the pages go
 With torches flaring through the gloom,

And trump and timbrel merriment
Accompanies their way ;
And multitudes with loud acclaim
Shout blessings on the Bride.
And now they reach the palace pile,
The palace home of Thalaba,
And now the marriage feast is spread,
And from the finish'd banquet now
The wedding guests are gone.
Who comes from the bridal chamber ? . . .

It is Azrael, the Angel of Death.

BOOK THE EIGHTH.

COLD ! cold ! 'tis a chilly clime
That the youth in his journey hath reach'd,
And he is aweary now,
And faint for lack of food.
Cold ! cold ! there is no Sun in heaven,
A heavy and uniform cloud
Overspreads the face of the sky,
And the snows are beginning to fall.
Dost thou wish for thy deserts, O Son of Hodeirah ?
Dost thou long for the gales of Arabia ?
Cold ! cold ! his blood flows languidly,
His hands are red, his lips are blue,
His feet are sore with the frost.
Cheer thee ! cheer thee ! Thalaba !
A little yet bear up !

All waste ! no sign of life
But the track of the wolf and the bear !
No sound but the wild, wild wind,
And the snow crunching under his feet !
Night is come ; neither moon, nor stars,
Only the light of the snow !
But behold a fire in a cave of the hill,
A heart-reviving fire ;
And thither with strength renew'd
Thalaba presses on.

He found a Woman in a cave,
A solitary Woman,
Who by the fire was spinning,
And singing as she spun.
The pine boughs were cheerfully blazing,
And her face was bright with the flame ;
Her face was as a Damsel's face,
And yet her hair was grey.

She bade him welcome with a smile,
And still continued spinning,
And singing as she spun.
The thread the woman drew
Was finer than the silkworm's,
Was finer than the gossamer ;
The song she sung was low and sweet,
But Thalaba knew not the words.

He laid his bow before the hearth,
For the string was frozen stiff ;
He took the quiver from his neck,
For the arrow-plumes were iced.
Then as the cheerful fire
Revived his languid limbs,
The adventurer ask'd for food.

The Woman answer'd him,
And still her speech was song :
" The She Bear she dwells near to me,
And she hath cubs, one, two, and three ;
She hunts the deer, and brings him here,
And then with her I make good cheer ;
And now to the chase the She Bear is gone,
And she with her prey will be here anon."

She ceased her spinning while she spake ;
And when she had answer'd him,
Again her fingers twirl'd the thread,
And again the Woman began,
In low, sweet tones to sing
The unintelligible song.

The thread she spun it gleam'd like gold
In the light of the odorous fire,
Yet was it so wondrously thin,
That, save when it shone in the light,
You might look for it closely in vain.
The youth sate watching it,
And she observed his wonder,
And then again she spake,
And still her speech was song ;
" Now twine it round thy hands I say,
Now twine it round thy hands I pray !
My thread is small, my thread is fine,
But he must be
A stronger than thee,
Who can break this thread of mine ! "

And up she raised her bright blue eyes,
And sweetly she smiled on him,
And he conceived no ill ;
And round and round his right hand,

And round and round his left,
He wound the thread so fine.
And then again the Woman spake,
And still her speech was song,
"Now thy strength, O Stranger, strain !
Now then break the slender chain."

Thalaba strove, but the thread
By magic hands was spun,
And in his cheek the flush of shame
Arose, commixt with fear.
She beheld and laugh'd at him,
And then again she sung,
"My thread is small, my thread is fine,
But he must be
A stronger than thee,
Who can break this thread of mine !"

And up she raised her bright blue eyes,
And fiercely she smiled on him :
"I thank thee, I thank thee, Hodeirah's son !
I thank thee for doing what can't be undone,
For binding thyself in the chain I have spun !"
Then from his head she wrench'd
A lock of his raven hair,
And cast it in the fire,
And cried aloud as it burnt,
"Sister ! Sister ! hear my voice !
Sister ! Sister ! come and rejoice !
The thread is spun,
The prize is won,
The work is done,
For I have made captive Hodeirah's Son."

Borne in her magic car
The Sister Sorceress came,
Khawla, the fiercest of the Sorcerer brood.
She gazed upon the youth,
She bade him break the slender thread,
She laugh'd aloud for scorn,
She clapt her hands for joy.

The She Bear from the chase came in,
She bore the prey in her bloody mouth,
She laid it at Maimuna's feet,
And then look'd up with wistful eyes
As if to ask her share.

"There! there!" quoth Maimuna,
And pointing to the prisoner-youth,
She spurn'd him with her foot,
And bade her make her meal.
But then their mockery fail'd them,
And anger and shame arose;
For the She Bear fawn'd on Thalaba,
And quietly lick'd his hand.

The grey-hair'd Sorceress stamp'd the ground,
And call'd a Spirit up;
"Shall we bear the Enemy
To the dungeon dens below?"

SPIRIT.

Woe! woe! to our Empire woe!
If ever he tread the caverns below,

MAIMUNA.

Shall we leave him fetter'd here
With hunger and cold to die?

SPIRIT.

Away from thy lonely dwelling fly !
Here I see a danger nigh,
That he should live and thou should'st die.

MAIMUNA.

Whither then must we bear the foe ?

SPIRIT.

To Mohareb's island go,
There shalt thou secure the foe,
There prevent thy future woe.

Then in the Car they threw
The fetter'd Thalaba,
And took their seats, and set
Their feet upon his neck ;
Maimuna held the reins,
And Khawla shook the scourge,
And away ! away ! away !

They were no steeds of mortal race
That drew the magic car
With the swiftness of feet and of wings.
The snow-dust rises behind them,
The ice-rock's splinters fly,
And hark in the valley below
The sound of their chariot wheels, . . .
And they are far over the mountains !
Away ! away ! away !
The Demons of the air
Shout their joy as the Sisters pass,
The Ghosts of the Wicked that wander by night
Flit over the magic car.

Away ! away ! away !
Over the hills and the plains,
Over the rivers and rocks,
Over the sands of the shore ;
The waves of ocean heave
Under the magic steeds ;
With unwet hoofs they trample the deep,
And now they reach the Island coast,
And away to the city the Monarch's abode.
Open fly the city gates,
Open fly the iron doors,
The doors of the palace-court.
Then stopt the charmed car.

The Monarch heard the chariot wheels,
And forth he came to greet
The mistress whom he served.
He knew the captive youth,
And Thalaba beheld
Mohareb in the robes of royalty,
Whom erst his arm had thrust
Down the bitumen pit.

BOOK THE TENTH.

Released miraculously from the toils of the Sorcerers, Thalaba pursues his journey and reaches a fair garden.

It was a little, lowly dwelling-place,
Amid a garden whose delightful air
Was mild and fragrant as the evening wind
Passing in summer o'er the coffee-groves
Of Yemen, and its blessed bowers of balm.

A fount of Fire that in the centre play'd
Roll'd all around its wondrous rivulets,
And fed the garden with the heat of life.
Every where magic ! the Arabian's heart
 Yearn'd after human intercourse.
A light ; . . . the door unclosed ! . . .
 All silent . . . he goes in.

There lay a Damsel, sleeping on a couch :
His step awoke her, and she gazed at him
 With pleased and wondering look,
 Fearlessly, like a happy child,
 Too innocent to fear.
 With words of courtesy
 The young intruder spake.
At the sound of his voice, a joy
Kindled her bright black eyes ;
She rose and took his hand ;
But at the touch the joy forsook her cheek :
 " Oh ! it is cold ! " she cried,
" I thought I should have felt it warm, like mine,
 But thou art like the rest ! "

Thalaba stood mute awhile,
And wondering at her words :
" Cold ? Lady ! " then he said : " I have travell'd long
 In this cold wilderness,
 Till life is well-nigh spent ! "

LAILA.

Art thou a Man, then ?

THALABA.

Nay . . . I did not think
Sorrow and toil could so have alter'd me,
 As to seem otherwise.

LAILA.

And thou canst be warm
Sometimes? life-warm as I am?

THALABA.

Surely, Lady,
As others are, I am, to heat and cold
Subject like all. You see a Traveller,
Bound upon hard adventure, who requests
Only to rest him here to-night, . . . to-morrow
He will pursue his way.

LAILA.

Oh . . . not to-morrow !
Not, like a dream of joy, depart so soon !
And whither wouldst thou go? for all around
Is everlasting winter, ice and snow,
Deserts unpassable of endless frost.

THALABA.

He who has led me here, will still sustain me
Through cold and hunger.

“Hunger?” Laila cried :
She clapt her lily hands,
And whether from above, or from below,
It came, sight could not see,
So suddenly the floor was spread with food.

LAILA.

Why dost thou watch with hesitating eyes
The banquet? 'tis for thee ! I bade it come.

THALABA.

Whence came it ?

LAILA.

Matters it from whence it came ?

My Father sent it : when I call, he hears.
Nay, . . . thou hast fabled with me ! and art like
The forms that wait upon my solitude,
Human to eye alone ; . . . thy hunger would not
Question so idly else.

THALABA

I will not eat !

It came by magic ! fool, to think that aught
But fraud and danger could await me here.
Let loose my cloak ! . . .

LAILA.

Begone then, insolent !

Why dost thou stand and gaze upon me thus ?
Ah ! eye the features well that threaten thee
With fraud and danger ! in the wilderness
They shall avenge me, . . . in the hour of want,
Rise on thy view, and make thee feel
How innocent I am :
And this remember'd cowardice and insult,
With a more painful shame will burn thy cheek,
Than now heats mine in anger !

THALABA.

Mark me, Lady !

Many and restless are my enemies ;
My daily paths have been beset with snares
Till I have learnt suspicion, bitter sufferings

Teaching the needful vice. If I have wrong'd you, . . .
For yours should be the face of innocence, . . .
I pray you pardon me ! In the name of God
And of his Prophet, I partake your food.

LAILA.

Lo, now ! thou wert afraid of sorcery,
And yet hast said a charm !

THALABA.

A charm ?

LAILA.

And wherefore ? . . .
Is it not delicate food ? . . . What mean thy words ?
I have heard many spells, and many names,
That rule the Genii and the Elements,
But never these.

THALABA.

How ! never heard the names
Of God and of the Prophet ?

LAILA.

Never . . . nay now !
Again that troubled eye ? . . . thou art a strange man,
And wondrous fearful . . . but I must not twice
Be charged with fraud ! If thou suspectest still,
Depart and leave me !

THALABA.

And you do not know
The God that made you ?

LAILA.

Made me, man ! . . . my Father
Made me. He made this dwelling, and the grove,
And yonder fountain-fire ; and every morn
He visits me, and takes the snow, and moulds
Women and men, like thee ; and breathes into them
Motion, and life, and sense, . . . but, to the touch
They are chilling cold ; and ever when night closes
They melt away again, and leave me here
Alone and sad. Oh then how I rejoice
When it is day, and my dear Father comes
And cheers me with kind words and kinder looks !
My dear, dear Father ! . . . Were it not for him,
I am so weary of this loneliness,
That I should wish I also were of snow,
That I might melt away, and cease to be.

THALABA.

And have you always had your dwelling here
Amid this solitude of snow ?

LAILA.

I think so.

I can remember, with unsteady feet
Tottering from room to room, and finding pleasure
In flowers, and toys, and sweetmeats, things which long
Have lost their power to please ; which, when I see them,
Raise only now a melancholy wish,
I were the little trifler once again
Who could be pleased so lightly !

THALABA.

Then you know not
Your Father's art ?

LAILA.

No. I besought him once
To give me power like his, that where he went
I might go with him ; but he shook his head,
And said, it was a power too dearly bought,
And kiss'd me with the tenderness of tears.

THALABA.

And wherefore hath he hidden you thus far
From all the ways of humankind ?

LAILA.

'Twas fear,
Fatherly fear and love. He read the stars,
And saw a danger in my destiny,
And therefore placed me here amid the snows,
And laid a spell that never human eye,
If foot of man by chance should reach the depth
Of this wide waste, shall see one trace of grove,
Garden or dwelling-place, or yonder fire,
That thaws and mitigates the frozen sky,
And, more than this, even if the Enemy
Should come, I have a Guardian here.

THALABA.

A Guardian ?

LAILA.

'Twas well, that when my sight unclosed upon thee,
There was no dark suspicion in thy face,
Else I had called his succour ! Wilt thou see him ?
But, if a woman can have terrified thee,
How wilt thou bear his unrelaxing brow,
And lifted lightnings ?

THALABA.

Lead me to him, Lady !

She took him by the hand,
And through the porch they pass'd.
Over the garden and the grove
The fountain-streams of fire
Pour'd a broad light like noon :
A broad unnatural light,
Which made the rose's blush of beauty pale,
And dimm'd the rich geranium's scarlet blaze.
The various verdure of the grove
Wore here one undistinguishable grey,
Chequer'd with blacker shade.
Suddenly Laila stopt,
" I do not think thou art the enemy."
She said, " but he will know !
If thou hast meditated wrong,
Stranger, depart in time. . . .
I would not lead thee to thy death."

She turn'd her gentle eyes
Toward him then with anxious tenderness.
" So let him pierce my breast," cried Thalaba,
" If it hide thought to harm you !"

LAILA.

Almost I fear to look at ! . . . yet come on.
'Twill ease me of a heaviness that seems
To sink my heart ; and thou may'st dwell here then
In safety ; . . . for thou shalt not go to-morrow,
Nor on the after, nor the after day,
Nor ever ! It was only solitude

Which made my misery here, . . .
And now, that I can see a human face,
And hear a human voice . . .
Oh no ! thou wilt not leave me !

THALABA.

Alas, I must not rest !
The star that ruled at my nativity,
Shone with a strange and blasting influence.
O gentle Lady ! I should draw upon you
A killing curse !

LAILA.

But I will ask my Father
To save you from all danger ; and you know not
The wonders he can work ; and when I ask,
It is not in his power to say me nay.
Perhaps thou know'st the happiness it is
To have a tender Father ?

THALABA.

He was one,
Whom, like a loathsome leper, I have tainted
With my contagious destiny. One evening
He kiss'd me as he wont, and laid his hands
Upon my head, and blest me ere I slept.
His dying groan awoke me, for the Murderer
Had stolen upon our sleep ! . . . For me was meant
The midnight blow of death ; my Father died ;
The brother playmates of my infancy,
The baby at the breast, they perish'd all, . . .
All in that dreadful hour ! . . . but I was saved
To remember and revenge.

She answer'd not ; for now,
Emerging from the o'er-arch'd avenue,
The finger of her upraised hand
Mark'd where the Guardian of the garden stood.
It was a brazen Image, every limb
And swelling vein and muscle true to life :
The left knee bending on,
The other straight, firm planted, and his hand
Lifted on high to hurl
The lightning that it grasp'd.

When Thalaba approach'd,
The enchanted Image knew Hodeirah's son.
And hurl'd the lightning at the dreaded foe.
But from Mohareb's hand
Had Thalaba received Abdaldar's Ring.
Blindly the wicked work
The righteous will of Heaven.
Full in his face the lightning-bolt was driven ;
The scatter'd fire recoil'd ;
Like the flowing of a summer gale he felt
Its ineffectual force ;
His countenance was not changed,
Nor a hair of his head was singed.

He started, and his glance
Turn'd angrily upon the Maid.
The sight disarm'd suspicion ; . . . breathless, pale,
Against a tree she stood ;
Her wan lips quivering, and her eyes
Upraised, in silent supplicating fear.

Anon she started with a scream of joy,
Seeing her Father there,
And ran and threw her arms around his neck.
" Save me ! " she cried, " the Enemy is come !
Save me ! save me ! Okba ! "

“Okba !” repeats the youth ;
For never since that hour,
When in the tent the Spirit told his name,
Had Thalaba let slip
The memory of his Father’s murderer ;
“Okba !” . . . and in his hand
He graspt an arrow-shaft,
And he rush’d on to strike him.

“Son of Hodeirah !” the Old Man replied,
“My hour is not yet come ;”
And putting forth his hand
Gently he repell’d the Youth.
“My hour is not yet come !
But thou may’st shed this innocent Maiden’s blood ;
That vengeance God allows thee !”

Around her Father’s neck
Still Laila’s hands were clasp’d ;
Her face was turn’d to Thalaba,
A broad light floated o’er its marble paleness,
As the wind waved the fountain fire,
Her large dilated eye, in horror raised,
Watch’d every look and movement of the youth :
“Not upon her,” said he,
“Not upon her, Hodeirah’s blood cries out
For vengeance !” and again his lifted arm
Threaten’d the Sorcerer :
Again withheld, it felt
A barrier that no human strength could burst.

“Thou dost not aim the blow more eagerly,”
Okba replied, “than I would rush to meet it !
But that were poor revenge.
O Thalaba, thy God

Wrecks on the innocent head
His vengeance ; . . . I must suffer in my child !
Why dost thou pause to strike thy victim ? Allah
Permits, . . . commands the deed."

"Liar !" quoth Thalaba.
And Laila's wondering eye
Look'd up, all anguish, to her father's face.
"By Allah and the Prophet," he replied,
"I speak the words of truth.
Misery ! misery !
That I must beg mine enemy to speed
The inevitable vengeance now so near !
I read it in her horoscope ;
Her birth-star warn'd me of Hodeirah's race.
I laid a spell, and call'd a Spirit up ;
He answered, one must die,
Laila or Thalaba. . . .
Accursed Spirit ! even in truth
Giving a lying hope !
Last, I ascended the seventh Heaven,
And on the Everlasting Table there,
In characters of light,
I read her written doom.
The years that it has gnawn me ! and the load
Of sin that it has laid upon my soul !
Curse on this hand, that in the only hour
The favouring Stars allow'd,
Reek'd with other blood than thine.
Still dost thou stand and gaze incredulous ?
Young man, be merciful, and keep her not
Longer in agony."

Thalaba's unbelieving frown
Scowl'd on the Sorcerer,
When in the air the rush of wings was heard,

And Azrael stood before them.
In equal terror, at the sight,
The Enchanter, the Destroyer stood,
And Laila, the victim Maid.

"Son of Hodeirah?" said the Angel of Death,
"The accursed fables not.
When from the Eternal Hand I took
The yearly scroll of Fate,
Her name was written there; . . .
Her leaf had wither'd on the Tree of Life.
This is the hour, and from thy hands
Commission'd to receive the Maid I come."

"Hear me, O Angel!" Thalaba replied;
"To avenge my father's death.
To work the will of Heaven,
To root from earth the accursed sorcerer race,
I have dared danger undismay'd,
I have lost all my soul held dear,
I am cut off from all the ties of life,
Unmurmuring. For whate'er awaits me still,
Pursuing to the end the enterprise,
Peril or pain, I bear a ready heart.
But strike this Maid! the innocent! . . .
Angel, I dare not do it."

"Remember," answer'd Azrael, "all thou say'st
Is written down for judgment! every word
In the balance of thy trial must be weigh'd!"
"So be it!" said the Youth:
"He who can read the secrets of the heart,
Will judge with righteousness!
This is no doubtful path;
The voice of God within me cannot lie. . . .
I will not harm the innocent."

He said, and from above,
As though it were the Voice of Night,
The startling answer came.

“Son of Hodeirah, think again!

One must depart from hence,

Laila, or Thalaba ;

She dies for thee, or thou for her ;

It must be life for life !

Son of Hodeirah weigh it well,

While yet the choice is thine !”

He hesitated not,

But, looking upward, spread his hands to Heaven,

“Oneiza, in thy bower of Paradise,

Receive me, still unstain'd !”

“What !” exclaim'd Okba, “darest thou disobey,

Abandoning all claim

To Allah's longer aid ?”

The eager exultation of his speech

Earthward recall'd the thoughts of Thalaba.

“And dost thou triumph, Murderer? dost thou deem

Because I perish, that the unsleeping lids

Of Justice shall be closed upon thy crime?

Poor, miserable man ! that thou canst live

With such beast-blindness in the present joy,

When o'er thy head the sword of God

Hangs for the certain stroke !”

“Servant of Allah, thou hast disobey'd ;

God hath abandon'd thee ;

This hour is mine !” cried Okba.

And shook his daughter off,

And drew the dagger from his vest,

And aim'd the deadly blow.

All was accomplish'd. Laila rush'd between
To save the saviour Youth.
She met the blow, and sunk into his arms,
And Azrael, from the hands of Thalaba,
Received her parting soul.

BOOK THE ELEVENTH.

Laila, in the fashion of a Bird of Paradise, is sent to guide Thalaba through the mountains, to where a sledge awaits him, which shall take him yet further on his search for the ocean-cavern of the Sorcerers.

AND lo ! beneath yon lonely pine, the Sledge : . . .
There stand the harness'd Dogs,
Their wide eyes watching for the youth,
Their ears erect, and turn'd toward his way.
They were lean as lean might be,
Their furrow'd ribs rose prominent,
And they were black from head to foot,
Save a white line on every breast,
Curved like the crescent moon.
Thalaba takes his seat in the sledge ;
His arms are folded on his breast,
The Bird is on his knees ;
There is fear in the eyes of the Dogs,
There is fear in their pitiful moan.
And now they turn their heads,
And seeing him seated, away !
The youth, with the start of their speed,
Falls back to the bar of the sledge ;
His hair floats straight in the stream of the wind
Like the weeds in the running brook.

They wind with speed their upward way,
An icy path through rocks of ice :
His eye is at the summit now,
And thus far all is dangerless ;
And now upon the height
The black Dogs pause and pant ;
They turn their eyes to Thalaba
As if to plead for pity ;
They moan and whine with fear.

Once more away ! and now
The long descent is seen,
A long, long, narrow path ;
Ice-rocks aright, and hills of snow,
Aleft the precipice.
Be firm, be firm, O Thalaba !
One motion now, one bend,
And on the crags below
Thy shatter'd flesh will harden in the frost
Why howl the Dogs so mournfully ?
And wherefore does the blood flow fast
All purple o'er their sable skin ?
His arms are folded on his breast,
Nor scourge nor goad hath he,
No hand appears to strike,
No sounding lash is heard ;
But piteously they moan and whine,
And track their way with blood.

Behold ! on yonder height
A giant Fiend aloft
Waits to thrust down the tottering avalanche !
If Thalaba looks back, he dies ;
The motion of fear is death.
On . . . on . . . with swift and steady pace,
Adown that dreadful way !

The Youth is firm, the Dogs are fleet,
The Sledge goes rapidly ;
The thunder of the avalanche
Re-echoes far behind.

On . . . on . . . with swift and steady pace,
Adown that dreadful way
The Dogs are fleet, the way is steep,
The Sledge goes rapidly ;
They reach the plain below.

A wide, blank plain, all desolate.
Nor tree, nor bush, nor herb !
On go the Dogs with rapid course,
The Sledge slides after rapidly,
And now the sun went down.
They stopt and look'd at Thalaba,
The Youth perform'd his prayer !
They knelt beside him while he pray'd,
They turn'd their heads to Mecca,
And tears ran down their cheeks.
Then down they laid them in the snow,
As close as they could lie,
They laid them down and slept.
And backward in the sledge,
The Adventurer laid himself ;
There peacefully slept Thalaba,
And the Green Bird of Paradise
Lay nestling in his breast.

The Dogs awoke him at the dawn,
They knelt and wept again ;
Then rapidly they journey'd on,
And still the plain was desolate,
Nor tree, nor bush, nor herb !
And ever at the hour of prayer,
They stopt, and knelt, and wept ;

And still that green and graceful Bird
Was as a friend to him by day,
And, ever when at night he slept,
Lay nestling in his breast.

In that most utter solitude
It cheer'd his heart to hear
Her soft and soothing voice.
Her voice was soft and sweet,
It rose not with the blackbird's thrill,
Nor warbled like that dearest bird that holds
The solitary man
A loiterer in his thoughtful walk at eve ;
But if it swell'd with no exuberant joy,
It had a tone that touch'd a finer string,
A music that the soul received and own'd.
Her bill was not the beak of blood ;
There was a human meaning in her eye
When fix'd on Thalaba,
He wonder'd while he gazed,
And with mysterious love
Felt his heart drawn in powerful sympathy.

Oh joy ! the signs of life appear,
The first and single Fir
That on the limits of the living world
Strikes in the ice its roots ;
Another, and another now ;
And now the Larch, that flings its arms
Down-curving like the falling wave ;
And now the Aspen's scatter'd leaves
Grey-glittering on the moveless twig ;
The Poplar's varying verdure now,
And now the Birch so beautiful
Light as a lady's plumes.

Oh joy ! the signs of life ! the Deer
Hath left his slot beside the way ;
The little Ermine now is seen,
White wanderer of the snow ;
And now from yonder pines they hear
The clatter of the Grouse's wings ;
And now the snowy Owl pursues
The Traveller's sledge, in hope of food ;
And hark ! the rosy-breasted bird,
The Thristle of sweet song !
Joy ! joy ! the winter-wilds are left !
Green bushes now, and greener grass,
Red thickets here, all berry-bright,
And here the lovely flowers !

When the last morning of their way was come,
After the early prayer,
The Green Bird fix'd on Thalaba
A sad and supplicating eye,
And speech was given her then :
" Servant of God, I leave thee now ;
If rightly I have guided thee,
Give me the boon I beg ! "

" O gentle Bird ! " quoth Thalaba,
" Guide and companion of my dangerous way,
Friend and sole solace of my solitude,
How can I pay thee benefits like these ?
Ask what thou wilt that I can give,
O gentle Bird, the poor return
Will leave me debtor still ! "

" Son of Hodeirah ! " she replied,
" When thou shalt see an Old Man bent beneath
The burthen of his earthly punishment,

Forgive him, Thalaba !
Yea, send a prayer to God in his behalf ! ”

A flush o’erspread the young Destroyer’s cheek ;
He turn’d his eye towards the Bird
As if in half repentance ; for he thought
Of Okba ; and his Father’s dying groan
Came on his memory. The celestial Bird
Saw and renew’d her speech ;
“ O Thalaba, if she who in thine arms
Received the dagger-blow and died for thee
Deserve one kind remembrance, . . . save, O save
The Father that she loves from endless death ! ”

“ Laila ! and is it thou ? ” the youth replied,
“ What is there that I durst refuse to thee ?
This is no time to harbour in my heart
One evil thought ; . . . here I put off revenge,
The last rebellious feeling. . . Be it so !
God grant to me the pardon that I need,
As I do pardon him ! . . .
But who am I, that I should save
The sinful soul alive ? ”

“ Enough ! ” said Laila. “ When the hour shall come,
Remember me ! my task is done.
We meet again in Paradise ! ”
She said, and shook her wings, and up she soar’d
With arrowy swiftmess through the heights of Heaven.

His aching eye pursued her path,
When starting onward went the Dogs ;
More rapidly they hurried now,
In hope of near repose.
It was ^{the} early morning yet,

When, by the well-head of a brook
They stopt, their journey done.
The spring was clear, the water deep ;
A venturous man were he, and rash,
That should have probed its depths ;
For all its loosen'd bed below,
Heaved strangely up and down,
And to and fro, from side to side,
It heaved, and waved, and toss'd,
And yet the depths were clear,
And yet no ripple wrinkled o'er
The face of that fair Well.

And on that Well, so strange and fair,
A little boat there lay,
Without an oar, without a sail,
One only seat it had, one seat,
As if for only Thalaba.
And at the helm a Damsel stood,
A Damsel bright and bold of eye,
Yet did a maiden modesty
Adorn her fearless brow ;
Her face was sorrowful, but sure
More beautiful for sorrow.
To her the Dogs look'd wistful up,
And then their tongues were loosed :
“ Have we done well, O Mistress dear !
And shall our sufferings end ? ”

The gentle Damsel made reply ;
“ Poor servants of the God I serve,
When all this witchery is destroy'd,
Your woes will end with mine.
A hope, alas ! how long unknown !
This new adventurer gives ;

Now God forbid, that he, like you,
Should perish for his fears !
Poor servants of the God I serve,
Wait ye the event in peace."

A deep and total slumber as she spake
Seized them. Sleep on, poor sufferers ! be at rest !
Ye wake no more to anguish : . . . ye have borne
The Chosen, the Destroyer ! . . . soon his hand
Shall strike the efficient blow ;
And shaking off your penal forms, shall ye,
With songs of joy, amid the Eden groves,
Hymn the Deliverer's praise.

Then did the Damsel say to Thalaba,
"The morn is young, the Sun is fair,
And pleasantly through pleasant banks
Yon quiet stream flows on . . .
Wilt thou embark with me ?
Thou knowest not the water's way ;
Think, Stranger, well ! and night must come, . . .
Darest thou embark with me ?
Through fearful perils thou must pass, . . .
Stranger, the wretched ask thine aid !
Thou wilt embark with me !"
She smiled in tears upon the youth ; . . .
What heart were his, who could gainsay
That melancholy smile ?
"I will," quoth Thalaba,
"I will, in Allah's name !"

He sate him on the single seat,
The little boat moved on.
Through pleasant banks the quiet stream
Went winding pleasantly ;
By fragrant fir-groves now it pass'd,
And now, through alder-shores,

Through green and fertile meadows now
 It silently ran by.
The flag-flower blossom'd on its side,
 The willow tresses waved,
The flowing current furrow'd round
 The water-lily's floating leaf,
The fly of green and gauzy wing,
 Fell sporting down its course ;
 And grateful to the voyager
The freshness that it breathed,
 And soothing to his ear
Its murmur round the prow,
 The little boat falls rapidly
 Adown the rapid stream.

But many a silent spring meantime,
 And many a rivulet and rill
 Had swoln the growing stream ;
And when the southern Sun began
To wind the downward way of heaven,
 It ran a river deep and wide,
 Through banks that widen'd still.
Then once again the Damsel spake :
" The stream is strong, the river broad,
 Wilt thou go on with me ?
The day is fair ; but night must come . . .
 Wilt thou go on with me !
Far, far away, the sufferer's eye
For thee hath long been looking, . . .
 " Thou wilt go on with me ! "
 " Sail on, sail on," quoth Thalaba,
 " Sail on, in Allah's name ! "
 The little boat falls rapidly
 Adown the river-stream.
A broader and yet broader stream,
 That rock'd the little boat !

The Cormorant stands upon its shoals,
His black and dripping wings
Half open'd to the wind.
The Sun goes down, the crescent Moon
Is brightening in the firmament ;
And what is yonder roar,
That sinking now, and swelling now,
But evermore increasing,
Still louder, louder, grows ?
The little boat falls rapidly
Adown the rapid tide ;
The Moon is bright above,
And the great Ocean opens on their way.

Then did the Damsel speak again,
" Wilt thou go on with me ? "
The moon is bright, the sea is calm,
I know the ocean-paths ;
Wilt thou go on with me ? . . .
Deliverer ! yes ! thou dost not fear !
Thou wilt go on with me ! "
" Sail on, sail on ! " quoth Thalaba,
" Sail on, in Allah's name ! "

The Moon is bright, the sea is calm,
The little boat rides rapidly
Across the ocean waves ;
The line of moonlight on the deep
Still follows as they voyage on ;
The winds are motionless ;
The gentle waters gently part
In dimples round the prow.
He looks above, he looks around,
The boundless heaven, the boundless sea,
The crescent moon, the little boat,
Nought else above, below.

THALABA THE DESTROYER.

The Moon is sunk ; a dusky grey
Spreads o'er the Eastern sky ;
The stars grow pale and paler ; . . .
Oh beautiful ! the godlike Sun
Is rising o'er the sea !
Without an oar, without a sail,
The little boat rides rapidly ; . . .
Is that a cloud that skirts the sea ?
There is no cloud in heaven !
And nearer now, and darker now . . .
It is . . . it is . . . the Land !
For yonder are the rocks that rise
Dark in the reddening morn ;
For loud around their hollow base
The surges rage and foam.
The little boat rides rapidly,
And pitches now with shorter toss
Upon the narrower swell ;
And now so near, they see
The shelves and shadows of the cliff,
And the low-lurking rocks,
O'er whose black summits, hidden half,
The shivering billows burst ; . . .
And nearer now they feel the breaker's spray.
Then said the Damsel : " Yonder is our path
Beneath the cavern arch.
Now is the ebb, and till the ocean flow
We cannot over-ride the rocks.
Go thou, and on the shore
Perform thy last ablutions, and with prayer
Strengthen thy heart . . . I too have need to pray."
She held the helm with steady hand
Amid the stronger waves ;
Through surge and surf she drove ;
The adventurer leapt to land.

BOOK THE TWELFTH.

THEN Thalaba drew off Abdaldar's ring,
And cast it in the sea, and cried aloud,
"Thou art my shield, my trust, my hope, O God !
Behold and guard me now,
Thou who alone canst save.

If from my childhood up I have look'd on
With exultation to my destiny ;
If in the hour of anguish I have own'd
The justice of the hand that chasten'd me ;
If of all selfish passions purified
I go to work thy will, and from the world
Root up the ill-doing race,
Lord ! let not thou the weakness of my arm
Make vain the enterprise !"

The Sun was rising all magnificent,
Ocean and Heaven rejoicing in his beams.
And now had Thalaba
Perform'd his last ablutions, and he stood
And gazed upon the little boat
Riding the billows near,
Where, like a sea-bird breasting the broad waves,
It rose and fell upon the surge,
Till from the glitterance of the sunny main
He turn'd his aching eyes ;
And then upon the beach he laid him down,
And watch'd the rising tide.
He did not pray, he was not calm for prayer ;
His spirit, troubled with tumultuous hope,
Toil'd with futurity ;
His brain, with busier workings, felt
The roar and raving of the restless sea,
The boundless waves that rose and roll'd and rock'd :
The everlasting sound

Opprest him, and the heaving infinite :
He closed his lids for rest.

Meantime with fuller reach and stronger swell,
Wave after wave advanced ;
Each following billow lifted the last foam
That trembled on the sand with rainbow hues ;
The living flower that, rooted to the rock,
Late from the thinner element
Shrunk down within its purple stem to sleep,
Now feels the water, and again
Awakening, blossoms out
All its green anther-necks.

Was there a Spirit in the gale
That fluttered o'er his cheek ?
For it came on him like the new-risen sun
Which plays and dallies o'er the night-closed flower.
And woos it to unfold anew to joy ;
For it came on him as the dews of eve
Descend with healing and with life
Upon the summer mead ;
Or liker the first sound of seraph song
And Angel greeting, to the soul
Whose latent sense had shudder'd at the groan
Of anguish, kneeling by a death-bed side.

He starts, and gazes round to seek
The certain presence. " Thalaba ! " exclaim'd
The Voice of the Unseen ; . . .
" Father of my Oneiza ! " he replied,
" And have thy years been number'd ? art thou too
Among the Angels ? " . . . " Thalaba ! "
A second and a dearer voice repeats,

“Go in the favour of the Lord,
 My Thalaba, go on !
 My husband, I have drest our bower of bliss.
 Go, and perform the work ;
 Let me not longer suffer hope in Heaven !”

He turn'd an eager glance toward the sea.
 “Come !” quoth the Damsel, and she drove
 Her little boat to land.
 Impatient through the rising wave.
 He rush'd to meet its way,
 His eye was bright, his cheek was flush'd with joy.
 “Hast thou had comfort in thy prayers?” she ask'd.
 “Yea,” Thalaba replied,
 “A heavenly visitation.” “God be praised !”
 She answer'd, “then I do not hope in vain !”
 And her voice trembled, and her lip
 Quiver'd, and tears ran down.

“Stranger,” said she, “in years long past
 Was one who vow'd himself
 The Champion of the Lord, like thee,
 Against the race of Hell.
 Young was he, as thyself,
 Gentle, and yet so brave !
 A lion-hearted man.
 Shame on me, Stranger ! in the arms of love
 I held him from his calling, till the hour
 Was past ; and then the Angel who should else
 Have crown'd him with his glory-wreath,
 Smote him in anger . . . Years and years are gone.
 And in his place of penance he awaits
 Thee, the Deliverer, . . . surely thou art he !
 It was my righteous punishment,

THALABA THE DESTROYER.

In the same youth unchanged,
And love unchangeable,
Sorrow for ever fresh,
And bitter penitence,
That gives no respite night nor day from grief,
To abide the written hour, when I should waft
The doom'd Destroyer and Deliverer here.
Remember thou, that thy success affects
No single fate, no ordinary woes."

As thus she spake, the entrance of the cave
Darken'd the boat below.
Around them from their nests,
The screaming sea-birds fled,
Wondering at that strange shape,
Yet alarm'd at sight of living man,
Unknowing of his sway and power misused;
The clamours of their young
Echoed in shriller cries,
Which rung in wild discordance round the rock.
And farther as they now advanced,
The dim reflection of the darken'd day
Grew fainter, and the dash
Of the out-breakers deaden'd ; farther yet,
And yet more faint the gleam,
And there the waters, at their utmost bound,
Silently rippled on the rising rock.
They landed and advanced, and deeper in,
Two adamantine doors
Closed up the cavern pass.

Reclining on the rock beside,
Sate a grey-headed man,
Watching an hour-glass by.
To him the Damsel spake,

“Is it the hour appointed?” The Old Man
 Nor answer’d her awhile,
 Nor lifted he his downward eye,
 For now the glass ran low,
 And, like the days of age,
 With speed perceivable,
 The latter sands descend;
 And now the last are gone.
 Then he look’d up, and raised his hand, and smote
 The adamantine gates.

The gates of adamant
 Unfolding at the stroke,
 Open’d and gave the entrance. Then she turn’d
 To Thalaba and said,
 “Go, in the name of God!
 I cannot enter; . . . I must wait the end
 In hope and agony.
 God and Mahommed prosper thee,
 For thy sake and for ours!”

He tarried not, . . . he pass’d
 The threshold, over which was no return.
 All earthly thoughts, all human hopes
 And passions now put off,
 He cast no backward glance
 Toward the gleam of day.
 There was a light within,
 A yellow light, as when the autumnal Sun,
 Through travelling rain and mist
 Shines on the evening hills:
 Whether, from central fires effused,
 Or that the sunbeams, day by day,
 From earliest generations, there absorb’d,
 Were gathering for the wrath-flame. Shade was none
 In those portentous vaults;

Crag overhanging, nor columnal rock
Cast its dark outline there ;
For with the hot and heavy atmosphere
The light incorporate, permeating all,
Spread over all its equal yellowness.
There was no motion in the lifeless air ;
He felt no stirring as he pass'd
Adown the long descent ;
He heard not his own footsteps on the rock
That through the thick stagnation sent no sound.
How sweet it were, he thought,
To feel the flowing wind !
With what a thirst of joy
He should breathe in the open gales of heaven !

Downward, and downward still, and still the way,
The lengthening way is safe.
Is there no secret wile,
No lurking enemy ?
His watchful eye is on the wall of rock, . . .
And warily he marks the roof,
And warily surveys
The path that lies before.
Downward, and downward still, and still the way,
The long, long way is safe ;
Rock only, the same light,
The same dead atmosphere,
And solitude, and silence like the grave.

At length the long descent
Ends on a precipice ;
No feeble ray enter'd its dreadful gulph ;
For in the pit profound,
Black Darkness, utter Night,
Repell'd the hostile gleam,

And o'er the surface the light atmosphere
 Floated, and mingled not.
 Above the depth, four over-awning wings,
 Unplumed and huge and strong,
 Bore up a little car ;
 Four living pinions, headless, bodiless,
 Sprung from one stem that branch'd below
 In four down-arching limbs,
 And clench'd the car-rings endlong and athwart,
 With claws of griffin grasp.

But not on these, the depth so terrible,
 The wondrous wings, fix'd Thalaba his eye ;
 For there, upon the brink,
 With fiery fetters fasten'd to the rock,
 A man, a living man, tormented lay,
 The young Othatha ; in the arms of love
 He who had linger'd out the auspicious hour,
 Forgetful of his call.

In shuddering pity, Thalaba exclaim'd,
 " Servant of God, can I not succour thee ? "
 He groan'd, and answer'd, " Son of Man,
 I sinn'd, and am tormented ; I endure
 In patience and in hope,
 The hour that shall destroy the Race of Hell,
 That hour shall set me free. "

" Is it not come ? " quoth Thalaba,
 " Yea ! by this omen ! " . . . and with fearless hand
 He grasp'd the burning fetters, " in the name
 Of God ! " . . . and from the rock
 Rooted the rivets, and adown the gulph
 Dropt them. The rush of flames roar'd up,
 For they had kindled in their fall
 The deadly vapours of the pit profound,
 And Thalaba bent on and look'd below.

But vainly he explored
The deep abyss of flame,
That sunk beyond the plunge of mortal eye,
Now all ablaze, as if infernal fires
Illumed the world beneath.
Soon was the poison-fuel spent,
The flame grew pale and dim,
And dimmer now it fades, and now is quench'd,
And all again is dark,
Save where the yellow air
Enters a little in and mingles slow.

Meantime, the freed Othatha claspt his knees,
And cried, "Deliverer!" struggling then
With joyful hope, "and where is she," he cried,
"Whose promised coming for so many a year . . ."
"Go!" answered Thalaba,
"She waits thee at the gates."
"And in thy triumph," he replied,
"There thou wilt join us?" . . . The Deliverer's eye
Glanced on the abyss, way else was none . . .
The depth was unascendable.
"Await not me," he cried,
"My path hath been appointed! go . . . embark!
Return to life, . . . live happy!"

OTHATHA.

But thy name? . . .
That through the nations we may blazon it, . . .
That we may bless thee!

THALABA.

Bless the Merciful!

Then Thalaba pronounced the name of God,
And leapt into the car.

Down, down, it sunk, . . . down, down, . . .

He neither breathes nor sees ;
His eyes are closed for giddiness,
His breath is sinking with the fall.
The air that yields beneath the car
Inflates the wings above.

Down . . . down . . . a measureless depth ! . . .down
. . . down,

Was then the Simorg with the Powers of ill
Associate to destroy ?

And was that lovely Mariner
A fiend as false as fair ?

For still the car sinks down ;
But ever the uprushing wind
Inflates the wings above,
And still the struggling wings
Repel the rushing wind.

Down . . . down . . . and now it strikes.

He stands and totters giddily,
All objects round awhile
Float dizzy on his sight ;

Collected soon, he gazes for the way.
There was a distant light that led his search ;

The torch a broader blaze,
The unpruned taper flares a longer flame,
But this was strong as is the moontide sun,
So, in the glory of its rays intense,
It quiver'd with green glow.

Beyond was all unseen,
No eye could penetrate
That unendurable excess of light.

It veil'd no friendly form, thought Thalaba :
And wisely did he deem,

For at the threshold of the rocky door,
I hugest and fiercest of his kind accurst,
Fit warden of the sorcery-gate,
A rebel Afreet lay ;
He scented the approach of human food,
And hungry hope kindled his eye of fire.
Raising his hand to screen the dazzled sense,
Onward held Thalaba,
And lifted still at times a rapid glance ;
Till the due distance gain'd,
With head abased, he laid
An arrow in its rest.
With steady effort and knit forehead then,
Full on the painful light
He fix'd his aching eye, and loosed the bow.

A hideous yell ensued ;
And sure no human voice had scope or power
For that prodigious shriek
Whose pealing echoes thundered up the rock.
Dim grew the dying light ;
But Thalaba leapt onward to the doors
Now visible beyond,
And while the Afreet warden of the way
Was writhing with his death-pangs, over him
Sprung and smote the stony doors,
And bade them, in the name of God, give way !

The dying Fiend beneath him, at that name
Tost in worse agony,
And the rocks shudder'd, and the rocky doors
Rent at the voice asunder. Lo ! within . . .
The Teraph and the Fire,
And Khawla, and in mail complete
Mohareb for the strife.
But Thalaba, with numbing force,

Smites his raised arm, and rushes by ;
For now he sees the fire, amid whose flames,
On the white ashes of Hodeirah, lies
Hodeirah's holy sword.

He rushes to the Fire :
Then Khawla met the youth,
And leapt upon him, and with clinging arms
Clasps him, and calls Mohareb now to aim
The effectual vengeance. O fool ! fool ! he sees
His Father's Sword, and who shall bar his way ?
Who stand against the fury of that arm
That spurns her to the ground ? . . .
She rises half, she twists around his knees, . . .
A moment . . . and he vainly strives
To shake her from her hold ;
Impatient then he seized her leathery neck
With throttling grasp, and as she loosed her hold,
Thrust her aside, and unimpeded now
Springs forward to the Sword.

The co-existent Flame
Knew the Destroyer ; it encircled him,
Roll'd up his robe, and gather'd round his head :
Condensing to intenser splendour there,
His Crown of Glory and his Light of Life,
Hover'd the irradiate wrath.

The instant Thalaba had laid his hand
Upon his Father's Sword,
The Living Image in the inner cave
Smote the Round Altar. The Domdaniel rock'd
Through all its thundering vaults ;
Over the Surface of the reeling Earth,
The alarum shock was felt ;

The Sorcerer brood, all, all, where'er dispersed,
Perforce obey'd the summons ; all, . . . they came
Compell'd by Hell and Heaven ;
By Hell compell'd to keep
Their baptism-covenant,
And with the union of their strength
Oppose the common danger ; forced by Heaven
To share the common doom.

Vain are all spells ! the Destroyer
Treads the Domdaniel floor.
They crowd with human arms and human force
To crush the single foe.
Vain is all human force !
He wields his Father's Sword,
The vengeance of awaken'd Deity.
But chief on Thalaba Mohareb prest ;
The Witch in her oracular speech
Announced one fatal blow for both,
And, desperate of self safety, yet he hoped
To serve the cause of Eblis, and uphold
His empire, true in death.

Who shall withstand the Destroyer ?
Scatter'd before the sword of Thalaba
The Sorcerer throng recede,
And leave him space for combat. Wretched man . . .
What shall the helmet or the shield avail
Against Almighty anger ? . . . wretched man,
Too late Mohareb finds that he hath chosen
The evil part ! . . . He rears his shield
To meet the Arabian's sword, . . .
Under the edge of that fire-hardened steel,
The shield falls sever'd ; his cold arm
Rings with the jarring blow : . . .
He lifts his scymetar ;

A second stroke, and lo ! the broken hilt
Hangs from his palsied hand :
And now he bleeds, and now he flies,
And fain would hide himself amid the troop ;
But they feel the sword of Hodeirah,
But they also fly from the ruin,
And hasten to the inner cave,
And fall all fearfully
Around the Giant Idol's feet,
Seeking protection from the Power they served.

It was a Living Image, by the art
Of magic hands, of flesh and bones composed,
And human blood, through veins and arteries
That flow'd with vital action. In the shape
Of Eblis it was made ;
Its stature such, and such its strength,
As when among the sons of God
Pre-eminent he raised his radiant head,
Prince of the Morning. On his brow
A coronet of meteor flames,
Flowing in points of light,
Self-poised in air before him
Hung the Round Altar, rolling like the World
On its diurnal axis, like the World
Chequer'd with sea and shore,
The work of Demon Art.
For where the sceptre in the Idol's hand
Touch'd the Round Altar, in its answering realm,
Earth felt the stroke, and Ocean rose in storms,
And shatter'd Cities, shaken from their seat,
Crush'd all their habitants.
His other arm was raised, and its spread palm
Sustain'd the ocean-weight,
Whose naked waters arch'd the sanctuary :
Sole prop and pillar he.

Fallen on the ground, around his feet,
The Sorcerers lay. Mohareb's quivering arms
Clung to the Idol's knees ;
The Idol's face was pale,
And calm in terror he beheld
The approach of the Destroyer.

Sure of his stroke, and therefore in pursuit
Following, nor blind, nor hasty, on his foe,
Moved the Destroyer. Okba met his way,
Of all that brotherhood
He only fearless, miserable man,
The one that had no hope.
"On me, on me," the childless Sorcerer cried,
Let fall the weapon ! I am he who stole
Upon the midnight of my Father's tent ;
This is the hand that pierced Hodeirah's heart,
That felt thy brethren's and thy sisters' blood
Gush round the dagger-hilt. Let fall on me
The fated sword ! the vengeance-hour is come !
Destroyer, do thy work !

Nor wile, nor weapon, had the desperate wretch ;
He spread his bosom to the stroke.
"Old Man, I strike thee not !" said Thalaba ;
"The evil thou hast done to me and mine
Brought its own bitter punishment.
For thy dear Daughter's sake I pardon thee,
As I do hope Heaven's pardon . . . For her sake
Repent while time is yet ! . . . thou hast my prayers
To aid thee ; thou poor sinner, cast thyself
Upon the goodness of offended God !
I speak in Laila's name ; and what if now
Thou canst not think to join in Paradise
Her spotless Spirit, . . . hath not Allah made

Al-Araf, in his wisdom ? where the sight
Of Heaven may kindle in the penitent
The strong and purifying fire of hope,
Till, at the Day of Judgment, he shall see
The Mercy-Gates unfold."

The astonish'd man stood gazing as he spake.
At length his heart was soften'd, and the tears
Gush'd, and he sobb'd aloud.
Then suddenly was heard
The all-beholding Prophet's voice divine,
"Thou hast done well, my Servant !
Ask and receive thy reward !"

A deep and awful joy
Seem'd to dilate the heart of Thalaba ;
With arms in reverence cross'd upon his breast,
Unseeking eyes suffused with tears devout,
He answered to the Voice, " Prophet of God,
Holy, and good, and bountiful !
One only earthly wish have I, to work
Thy will ; and thy protection grants me that.
Look on this Sorcerer ! heavy are his crimes,
But infinite is mercy ! if thy servant
Have now found favour in the sight of God,
Let him be touch'd with penitence, and save
His soul from utter death."

" The groans of penitence," replied the Voice,
" Never arise unheard !
But, for thyself, prefer the prayer ;
The Treasure-house of Heaven
Is open to thy will."

" Prophet of God ! " then answered Thalaba,
" I am alone on earth ;

Thou knowest the secret wishes of my heart !
Do with me as thou wilt ! thy will is best."

There issued forth no Voice to answer him ;
But, lo ! Hodeirah's Spirit comes to see
His vengeance, and beside him, a pure form
Of roseate light, his Angel mother hung.
" My Child, my dear, my glorious . . . blessed . . .
Child,
My promise is perform'd . . . fulfil thy work ! "

Thalaba knew that his death-hour was come ;
And on he leapt, and springing up,
Into the Idol's heart
Hilt deep he plunged the Sword.
The Ocean-vault fell in, and all were crush'd.
In the same moment, at the gate
Of Paradise; Oneiza's Hourî form
Welcomed her Husband to eternal bliss

THE CURSE OF KEHAMA.

BRAMA,.....the Creator.

VEESHNOO,..the Preserver.

SEEVA,.....the Destroyer.

These form the Trimourtee, or Trinity, as it has been called, of the Bramins. The allegory is obvious, but has been made for the Trimourtee, not the Trimourtee for the allegory; and these Deities are regarded by the people as three distinct and personal Gods. The two latter have at this day their hostile sects of worshippers; that of Seeva is the most numerous; and in this Poem, Seeva is represented as Supreme among the Gods. This is the same God whose name is variously written Seeb, Sieven, and Siva, Chiven by the French, Xiven by the Portuguese, and whom European writers sometimes denominate Eswara, Iswaren, Mahadeo, Mahadeva, Rutren,—according to which of his thousand and eight names prevailed in the country where they obtained their information.

INDRA,.....God of the Elements.

The SWERGA,...his Paradise,—one of the Hindoo heavens.

YAMEN,.....Lord of Hell, and Judge of the Dead.

PADALON,.....Hell,—under the Earth, and, like the Earth, of an octagon shape; its eight gates are guarded by as many Gods.

MARRIATALY,...the Goddess who is chiefly worshipped by the lower castes.

POLLEAR,.....or Ganesa,—the Protector of Travellers. His statues are placed in the highways, and sometimes in a small lonely sanctuary, in the streets and in the fields.

CASYAPA,.....the Father of the Immortals.

DEVETAS,.....the Inferior Deities.

SURAS,.....Good Spirits.

ASURAS,.....Evil Spirits, or Devils.

GLENDOVEERS...the most beautiful of the Good Spirits, the Grindouvers of Sonnerat.

The Curse of Ikebama.

I.

THE FUNERAL.

MIDNIGHT, and yet no eye
Through all the Imperial City closed in sleep !
Behold her streets a-blaze
With light that seems to kindle the red sky,
Her myriads swarming through the crowded ways !
Master and slave, old age and infancy.
All, all abroad to gaze ;
House-top and balcony
Clustered with women, who throw back their veils
With unimpeded and insatiate sight
To view the funeral pomp which passes by,
As if the mournful rite
Were but to them a scene of joyance and delight.

Vainly, ye blessed twinklers of the night,
Your feeble beams ye shed.
Quench'd in the unnatural light which might out-stare
Even the broad eye of day ;
And thou from thy celestial way
Pourest, O Moon, an ineffectual ray !
For lo ! ten thousand torches flame and flare

THE CURSE OF KEHAMA.

Upon the midnight air,
Blotting the lights of heaven
With one portentous glare.
Behold the fragrant smoke in many a fold
Ascending, floats along the fiery sky,
And hangeth visible on high,
A dark and waving canopy.

Hark ! 'tis the funeral trumpet's breath !
'Tis the dirge of death !
At once ten thousand drums begin,
With one long thunder-peal the ear assailing ;
Ten thousand voices then join in,
And with one deep and general din
Pour their wild wailing.
The song of praise is drown'd
Amid the deafening sound ;
You hear no more the trumpet's tone,
You hear no more the mourner's moan,
Though the trumpet's breath, and the dirge of death,
Swell with commingled force the funeral yell.
But rising over all in one acclaim
Is heard the echoed and re-echoed name,
From all that countless rout ;
Arvalan ! Arvalan !
Arvalan ! Arvalan !
Ten times ten thousand voices in one shout
Call Arvalan ! The overpowering sound,
From house to house repeated rings about,
From tower to tower rolls round.

The death-procession moves along ;
Their bald heads shining to the torches' ray,
The Bramins lead the way,
Chaunting the funeral song.

And now at once they shout,
Arvalan ! Arvalan !
With quick rebound of sound,
All in accordance cry,
Arvalan ! Arvalan !
The universal multitude reply.
In vain ye thunder on his ear the name ;
Would ye awake the dead ?
Borne upright in his palankeen,
There Arvalan is seen !
A glow is on his face, . . . a lively red ;
It is the crimson canopy
Which o'er his cheek a reddening shade hath shed ;
He moves, . . . he nods his head, . . .
But the motion comes from the bearers' tread,
As the body, borne aloft in state,
Sways with the impulse of its own dead weight.

Close following his dead son, Kehama came,
Nor joining in the ritual song,
Nor calling the dear name ;
With head deprest and funeral vest, *
And arms enfolded on his breast,
Silent and lost in thought he moves along.
King of the World, his slaves, unenvying now,
Behold their wretched Lord ; rejoiced they see
The mighty Rajah's misery ;
That Nature in his pride hath dealt the blow,
And taught the Master of Mankind to know
Even he himself is man, and not exempt from woe.

O sight of grief ! the wives of Arvalan,
Young Azla, young Nealliny, are seen !
Their widow-robcs of white,
With gold and jewels bright,
Each like an Eastern queen.

THE CURSE OF KEHAMA.

Woe ! woe ! around their palankeen,
 As on a bridal day,
With symphony, and dance, and song,
Their kindred and their friends come on.
The dance of sacrifice ! the funeral song !
And next the victim slaves in long array,
 Richly bedight to grace the fatal day,
 Move onward to their death ;
 The clarions' stirring breath
Lifts their thin robes in every flowing fold,
 And swells the woven gold,
 That on the agitated air
Flutters and glitters to the torch's glare.

A man and maid of aspect wan and wild,
Then, side by side, by bowmen guarded, came ;
 O wretched father ! O unhappy child !
Them were all eyes of all the throng exploring . . .
 Is this the daring man
 Who raised his fatal hand at Arvalan ?
 • Is this the wretch condemn'd to feel
 Kehama's dreadful wrath ?
Then were all hearts of all the throng deploring ;
 For not in that innumerable throng
Was one who loved the dead ; for who could know
 What aggravated wrong
 Provoked the desperate blow !

Far, far behind, beyond all reach of sight,
 In order'd files the torches flow along,
One ever-lengthening line of gliding light :
 Far . . . far behind,
Rolls on the undistinguishable clamour,
 Of horn, and trumpet, and tambour ;
 Incessant as the roar

Of streams which down the wintry mountain pour,
And louder than the dread commotion
Of breakers on a rocky shore,
When the winds rage over the waves,
And Ocean to the Tempest raves.

And now toward the bank they go,
Where winding on their way below,
Deep and strong the waters flow.
Here doth the funeral pile appear
With myrrh and ambergris bestrew'd,
And built of precious sandal wood.
They cease their music and their outcry here,
Gently they rest the bier ;
They wet the face of Arvalan,
No sign of life the sprinkled drops excite ;
They feel his breast, . . . no motion there ;
They feel his lips, . . . no breath ;
For not with feeble, nor with erring hand,
The brave avenger dealt the blow of death.
Then with a doubling peal and deeper blast,
The tambours and the trumpets sound on high,
And with a last and loudest cry
They call on Arvalan.

Woe ! woe ! for Azla takes her seat
Upon the funeral pile !
Calmly she took her seat,
Calmly the whole terrific pomp survey'd ;
As on her lap the while
The lifeless head of Arvalan was laid.

Woe ! woe ! Nealliny,
The young Nealliny !
They strip her ornaments away,
Bracelet and anklet, ring, and chain, and zone ;

THE CURSE OF KEHAMA.

Around her neck they leave
The marriage knot alone, . . .
That marriage band, which when
Yon waning moon was young,
Around her virgin neck
With bridal joy was hung.
Then with white flowers, the coronal of death,
Her jetty locks they crown.

O sight of misery !
You cannot hear her cries, . . . their sound
In that wild dissonance is drown'd ; . . .
But in her face you see
The supplication and the agony, . . .
See in her swelling throat the desperate strength
That with vain effort struggles yet for life ;
Her arms contracted now in fruitless strife,
Now wildly at full length
Towards the crowd in vain for pity spread, . . .
They force her on, they bind her to the dead.

Then all around retire ;
Circling the pile, the ministering Bramins stand,
Each lifting in his hand a torch on fire.
Alone the Father of the dead advanced
And lit the funeral pyre

At once on every side
The circling torches drop,
At once on every side
The fragrant oil is pour'd,
At once on every side
The rapid flames rush up.
Then hand in hand the victim band

Roll in the dance around the funeral pyre ;
 Their garments' flying folds
 Float inward to the fire ;
 In drunken whirl they wheel around ;
 One drops, . . . another plunges in ;
 And still with overwhelming din
 The tambours and the trumpets sound ;
And clap of hand, and shouts, and cries,
 From all the multitude arise ;
 While round and round, in giddy wheel,
 Intoxicate they roll and reel,
 Till one by one whirl'd in they fall,
And the devouring flames have swallow'd all.

Then all was still ; the drums and clarions ceased ;
 The multitude were hush'd in silent awe ;
 Only the roaring of the flames was heard.

II.

THE CURSE.

ALONE towards the Table of the Dead
Kehama moved ; there on the altar-stone
 Honey and rice he spread.
There with collected voice and painful tone
 He call'd upon his son.
 Lo ! Arvalan appears ;
 Only Kehama's powerful eye beheld
The thin ethereal spirit hovering nigh ;
 Only the Rajah's ear
 Received his feeble breath.
And is this all ? the mournful Spirit said,
This all that thou canst give me after death,
 This unavailing pomp,
These empty pageantries that mock the dead !

In bitterness the Rajah heard,
And groan'd, and smote his breast, and o'er his face
Cowl'd the white mourning vest.

ARVALAN.

Art thou not powerful, . . . even like a God?
And must I, through my years of wandering,
Shivering and naked to the elements,
In wretchedness await
The hour of Yamen's wrath?
I thought thou wouldst embody me anew,
Undying as I am, . . .
Yea, re-create me? . . . Father, is this all?
This all? and thou Almighty!

But in that wrongful and upbraiding tone,
Kehama found relief,
For rising anger half suppress his grief.
Reproach not me! he cried,
Had I not spell-secured thee from disease,
Fire, sword, . . . all common accidents of man, . . .
And thou! . . . fool, fool . . . to perish by a stake!
And by a peasant's arm! . . .
Even now, when from reluctant Heaven,
Forcing new gifts and mightier attributes,
So soon I should have quell'd the Death-God's power.

Waste not thy wrath on me, quoth Arvalan,
It was my hour of folly! Fate prevail'd,
Nor boots it to reproach me that I fell.
I am in misery, Father! Other souls
Predoom'd to Indra's Heaven, enjoy the dawn
Of bliss, . . . to them the temper'd elements
Minister joy: genial delight the sun

Sheds on their happy being, and the stars
Effuse on them benignant influences ;
And thus o'er earth and air they roam at will,
And when the number of their days is full,
Go fearlessly before the awful throne.
But I, . . . all naked feeling and raw life, . . .
What worse than this hath Yamen's hell in store?
If ever thou didst love me, mercy, Father !
Save me, for thou canst save . . . the Elements
Know and obey thy voice.

KEHAMA.

The Elements
Shall sin no more against thee ; whilst I speak
Already dost thou feel their power is gone.
Fear not ! I cannot call again the past,
Fate hath made that its own ; but Fate shall yield
To me the future ; and thy doom be fix'd
By mine, not Yamen's will. Meantime all power
Whereof thy feeble spirit can be made
Participant, I give. Is there aught else
To mitigate thy lot ?

ARVALAN.

Only the sight of vengeance. Give me that !
Vengeance, full, worthy, vengeance ! . . . not the stroke
Of sudden punishment, . . . no agony
That spends itself and leaves the wretch at rest,
By lasting long revenge.

KEHAMA.

What, boy ? is that cup sweet ? then take thy fill !

So as he spake, a glow of dreadful pride
Inflamed his cheek, with quick and angry side
He moved toward the pile,
And raised his hand to hush the crowd, and cried,
Bring forth the murderer ! At the Rajah's voice,
Calmly, and like a man whom fear had stunn'd,
Ladurlad came, obedient to the call.

Ladurlad roused himself ;
Ere yet the voice of destiny
Which trembled on the Rajah's lips was loosed,
Eager he interposed,
As if despair had waken'd him to hope ;
Mercy ! oh mercy ! only in defence . . .
Only instinctively . . .
Only to save my child, I smote the Prince ;
King of the world, be merciful !
Crush me, . . . but torture not !

The Man-Almighty deign'd him no reply,
Still he stood silent ; in no human mood
Of mercy, in no hesitating thought
Of right and justice. At the length he raised
His brow yet unrelax'd, . . . his lips unclosed,
And uttered from the heart,
With the whole feeling of his soul enforced,
The gathered vengeance came.

I charm thy life
From the weapons of strife,
From stone and from wood,
From fire and from flood,
From the serpent's tooth,
And the beasts of blood :
From Sickness I charm thee,

And Time shall not harm thee ;
But Earth which is mine,
Its fruits shall deny thee ;
And Water shall hear me,
And know thee and fly thee ;
And the Winds shall not touch thee
When they pass by thee,
And the Dews shall not wet thee,
When they fall nigh thee :
And thou shalt seek Death
To release thee, in vain ;
Thou shalt live in thy pain
While Kehama shall reign,
With a fire in thy heart,
And a fire in thy brain ;
And Sleep shall obey me,
And visit thee never,
And the Curse shall be on thee
For ever and ever.

There where the Curse had stricken him,
There stood the miserable man,
There stood Ladurlad, with loose-hanging arms,
And eyes of idiot wandering.
Was it a dream? alas,
He heard the river flow,
He heard the crumbling of the pile,
He heard the wind which shower'd
The thin white ashes round.
There motionless he stood,
As if he hoped it were a dream,
And feared to move, lest he should prove
The actual misery ;
And still at times he met Kehama's eye,
Kehama's eye that fastened on him still.

V.

THE SEPARATION.

EVENING comes on : arising from the stream,
Homeward the tall flamingo wings his flight ;
And where he sails athwart the setting beam,
His scarlet plumage glows with deeper light.
The watchman, at the wish'd approach of night,
Gladly forsakes the field, where he all day,
To scare the winged plunderers from their prey,
With shout and sling, on yonder clay-built height,
Hath borne the sultry ray.
Hark ! at the Golden Palaces
The Bramin strikes the hour.
For leagues and leagues around, the brazen sound
Rolls through the stillness of departing day,
Like thunder far away.

Behold them wandering on their hopeless way,
Unknowing where they stray,
Yet sure where'er they stop to find no rest.
The evening gale is blowing,
It plays among the trees ;
Like plumes upon a warrior's crest,
They see yon cocoas tossing to the breeze.
Ladurlad views them with impatient mind,
Impatiently he hears
The gale of evening blowing,
The sound of waters flowing,
As if all sights and sounds combined
To mock his irremediable woe ;
For not for him the blessed waters flow,
For not for him the gales of evening blow,
A fire is in his heart and brain,
And Nature hath no healing for his pain.

The Moon is up, still pale
Amid the lingering light.
A cloud ascending in the eastern sky,
Sails slowly o'er the vale.
And darkens round and closes in the night.
No hospitable house is nigh,
No traveller's home the wanderers to invite ;
Forlorn, and with long watching overworn,
The wretched father and the wretched child
Lie down amid the wild.

Before them full in sight,
A white flag flapping to the winds of night,
Marks where the tiger seized a human prey.
Far, far away with natural dread,
Shunning the perilous spot,
At other times abhorrent had they fled ;
But now they heed it not.
Nothing they care ; the boding death-flag now
In vain for them may gleam and flutter there.
Despair and agony in him,
Prevent all other thought ;
And Kailyal hath no heart or sense for aught,
Save her dear father's strange and miserable lot.

There in the woodland shade,
Upon the lap of that unhappy maid,
His head Ladurlad laid,
And never word he spake ;
Nor heaved he one complaining sigh,
Nor groaned he with his misery,
But silently for her dear sake
Endured the raging pain.
And now the moon was hid on high,
No stars were glimmering in the sky ;

She could not see her father's eye,
How red with burning agony ;
Perhaps he may be cooler now,
She hoped, and long'd to touch his brow
With gentle hand, yet did not dare
To lay the painful pressure there.
Now forward from the tree she bent,
And anxiously her head she leant,
And listen'd to his breath.
Ladurlad's breath was short and quick,
Yet regular it came,
And like the slumber of the sick,
In pantings still the same.
Oh if he sleeps ! . . . her lips unclose,
Intently listening to the sound,
That equal sound so like repose.
Still quietly the sufferer lies,
Bearing his torment now with resolute will ;
He neither moves, nor groans, nor sighs.
Doth sâtiâte cruelty bestow
This little respite to his woe,
She thought, or are there Gods, who look below ?

Perchance, thought Kailyal, willingly deceived,
Our Marriataly hath his pain relieved,
And she hath bade the blessed sleep assuage
His agony, despite the Rajah's rage.
That was a hope which fill'd her gushing eyes,
And made her heart in silent yearnings rise,
To bless the power divine in thankfulness.
And yielding to that joyful thought her mind,
Backward the maid her aching head reclined
Against the tree, and to her father's breath
In fear she hearken'd still with earnest ear.
But soon forgetful fits the effort broke ;
In starts of recollection then she woke,

Till now benignant Nature overcame
The Virgin's weary and exhausted frame,
Nor able more her painful watch to keep,
She closed her heavy lids, and sunk to sleep.

Vain was her hope ! he did not rest from pain,
The Curse was burning in his brain ;
Alas ! the innocent maiden thought he slept,
But Sleep the Rajah's dread commandment kept,
Sleep knew Kehama's Curse.
The dews of night fell round them now,
They never bathed Ladurlad's brow,
They knew Kehama's Curse,
The night-wind is abroad,
Aloft it moves among the stirring trees ;
He only heard the breeze, . . .
No healing aid to him it brought,
It play'd around his head and touch'd him not,
It knew Kehama's Curse.

Listening, Ladurlad lay in his despair,
If Kailyal slept, for wherefore should she share
Her father's wretchedness, which none could cure ?
Better alone to suffer ; he must bear
The burden of his Curse, but why endure
The unavailing presence of her grief ?
She too, apart from him, might find relief ;
For dead the Rajah deem'd her, and as thus
Already she his dread revenge had fled,
So might she still escape and live secure.

Gently he lifts his head
And Kailyal does not feel ;
Gently he rises up, . . . she slumbers still ;
Gently he steals away with silent tread.
Anon she started, for she felt him gone ;

She call'd, and through the stillness of the night,
His step was heard in flight
Mistrustful for a moment of the sound,
She listens ; till the step is heard no more ;
But then she knows that he indeed is gone,
And with a thrilling shriek she rushes on.
The darkness and the wood impede her speed ;
She lifts her voice again,
Ladurlad ! . . . and again, alike in vain,
And with a louder cry
Straining its tone to hoarseness ; . . . far away,
Selfish in misery,
He heard the call and faster did he fly.

She leans against that tree whose jutting bough
Smote her so rudely. Her poor heart
How audibly it panted,
With sudden stop and start ;
Her breath how short and painfully it came !
Hark ! all is still around her, . . .
And the night so utterly dark,
She opened her eyes and she closed them,
And the blackness and blank were the same.

'Twas like a dream of horror, and she stood
Half doubting whether all indeed were true.
A tiger's howl loud echoing through the wood,
Roused her ; the dreadful sound she knew,
And turn'd instinctively to what she fear'd.
Far off the tiger's hungry howl was heard ;
A nearer horror met the maiden's view,
For right before her a dim form appear'd,
A human form in the black night,
Distinctly shaped by its own lurid light,
Such light as the sickly moon is seen to shed,
Through spell-raised fogs, a bloody baleful red.

That Spectre fix'd his eyes upon her full ;
The light which shone in their accursed orbs
Was like a light from Hell,
And it grew deeper, kindling with the view.
She could not turn her sight
From that infernal gaze, which like a spell
Bound her, and held her rooted to the ground
It palsied every power,
Her limbs avail'd her not in that dread hour,
There was no moving thence,
Thought, memory, sense were gone :
She heard not now the tiger's nearer cry,
She thought not on her father now,
Her cold heart's blood ran back,
Her head lay senseless on the bough it clasp'd,
Her feet were motionless ;
Her fascinated eyes
Like the stone eye-balls of a statue fix'd,
Yet conscious of the sight that blasted them.

The wind is abroad,
It opens the clouds ;
Scatter'd before the gale,
The skurry through the sky,
And the darkness retiring rolls over the vale.
The Stars in their beauty come forth on high,
And through the dark blue night
The Moon rides on triumphant, broad and bright.
Distinct and darkening in her light,
Appears that Sceptre foul,
The moonbeam gives his face and form to sight,
The shape of man,
The living form and face of Arvalan ! . . .
His hands are spread to clasp her.

THE CURSE OF KEHAMA.

But at that sight of dread the Maid awoke ;
As if a lightning stroke
Had burst the spell of fear,
Away she broke all frantically, and fled.
There stood a temple near beside the way,
An open fane of Pollear, gentle God,
To whom the travellers for protection pray.
With elephantine head and eye severe,
Here stood his image, such as when he seiz'd
And tore the rebel Giant from the ground,
With mighty trunk wreathed round
His impotent bulk, and on his tusks, on high
Impaled upheld him between earth and sky.

Thither the affrighted Maiden sped her flight,
And she hath reach'd the place of sanctuary ;
And now within the temple in despite,
Yea, even before the altar, in his sight,
Hath Arvalan with fleshly arm of might
Seized her. That instant the insulted God
Caught him aloft, and from his sinuous grasp,
As if from some tort catapult let loose,
Over the forest hurl'd him all abroad.

O'ercome with dread,
She tarried not to see what heavenly Power
Had saved her in that hour ;
Breathless and faint she fled.
And now her foot struck on the knotted root
Of a broad manchineil, and there the Maid
Fell senselessly beneath the deadly shade.

VI.

CASYAPA.

SHALL this then be thy fate, O lovely Maid,
Thus, Kailyal, must thy sorrows then be ended?

Her face upon the ground,
Her arms at length extended,
There like a corpse behold her laid
Beneath the deadly shade.

What if the hungry tiger, prowling by,
Should snuff his banquet nigh?
Alas, Death needs not now his ministry;
The baleful boughs hang o'er her,
The poison-dews descend.
What Power will now restore her?
What God will be her friend?

Bright and so beautiful was that fair night,
It might have calm'd the gay amid their mirth,
And given the wretched a delight in tears.

One of the Glendoveers,
The loveliest race of all of heavenly birth,
Hovering with gentle motion o'er the earth,
Amid the moonlight air,
In sportive flight was floating round and round,
Unknowing where his joyous way was tending.
He saw the Maid where motionless she lay,
And stoopt his flight descending,
And raised her from the ground.
Her heavy eye-lids are half closed,
Her cheeks are pale and livid like the dead,
Down hang her loose arms lifelessly,
Down hangs her languid head.

With timely pity touch'd for one so fair,
The gentle Glendoveer

Press'd her thus pale and senseless to his breast,
And springs aloft in air with sinewy wings,
And bears the Maiden there,
Where Himakoot, the holy Mount, on high
From mid-earth rising in mid-Heaven,
Shines in its glory like the throne of Even.
Soaring with strenuous flight above,
He bears her to the blessed Grove,
Where in his ancient and august abodes,
There dwells old Casyapa, the Sire of Gods.

The Father of the Immortals sate,
Where underneath the Tree of Life,
The Fountains of the Sacred River sprung ;
The Father of the Immortals smiled
Benignant on his son.
Knowest thou, he said, my child,
Ereenia, knowest thou whom thou bringest here,
A mortal to the holy atmosphere?

EREENIA.

I found her in the Groves of Earth,
Beneath a poison-tree,
Thus lifeless as thou seest her.
In pity have I brought her to these bowers,
Not erring, Father ! by that smile . . .
By that benignant eye !

CASYAPA.

What if the Maid be sinful ? if her ways
Were ways of darkness, and her death predoom'd
To that black hour of midnight, when the Moon
Hath turn'd her face away,
Unwilling to behold
The unhappy end of guilt ?

EREENIA.

Then what a lie, my Sire, were written here,
In these fair characters ! and she had died,
Sure proof of purer life and happier doom,
Now in the moonlight, in the eye of Heaven,
If I had left so fair a flower to fade.
But thou, . . . all knowing as thou art,
Why askest thou of me ?
O Father, oldest, holiest, wisest, best,
To whom all things are plain,
Why askest thou of me ?

CASYAPA.

Knowest thou Kehama ?

EREENIA.

The Almighty Man !
Who knows not him and his tremendous power ?
The Tyrant of the Earth,
The Enemy of Heaven !

CASYAPA.

Fearest thou the Rajah ?

EREENIA.

He is terrible !

CASYAPA.

Yea, he is terrible ! such power hath he
That hope hath enter'd Hell.
The Asuras and the spirits of the damn'd
Acclaim their Hero ; Yamen, with the might
Of Godhead, scarce can quell
The rebel race accurst :

Half from their beds of torture they arise,
And half uproot their chains.
Is there not fear in Heaven ?
The Souls that are in bliss suspend their joy ;
The danger hath disturb'd
The calm of Deity,
And Brama fears, and Veshnoo turns his face
In doubt toward Seeva's throne.

EREENIA.

I have seen Indra tremble at his prayers,
And at his dreadful penances turn pale,
They claim and wrest from Seeva power so vast,
That even Seeva's self,
The Highest, cannot grant and be secure.

CASYAPA.

And darest thou, Ereenia, brave
The Almighty Tyrant's power ?

EREENIA.

I brave him, Father ! I ?

CASYAPA.

Darest thou brave his vengeance ? . . . For, if not,
Take her again to earth,
Cast her before the tiger in his path,
Or where the death-dew-dropping tree
May work Kehama's will.

EREENIA.

Never !

CASYAPA.

Then meet his wrath ! for He, even He,
Hath set upon this worm his wanton foot.

ERREENIA.

I knew her not, how wretched and how fair,
When here I wafted her . . . Poor Child of Earth,
Shall I forsake thee, seeing thee so fair,
So wretched ? O my Father, let the Maid
Dwell in the Sacred Grove !

CASYAPA.

That must not be,
For Force and Evil then would enter here ;
Ganges, the holy stream which cleanseth sin,
Would flow from hence polluted in its springs,
And they who gasp upon its banks in death,
Feel no salvation. Piety, and Peace,
And Wisdom, these are mine ; but not the power
Which could protect her from the Almighty Man ;
Nor when the spirit of dead Arvalan
Should persecute her here to glut his rage,
To heap upon her yet more agony,
And ripen more damnation for himself.

ERREENIA.

Dead Arvalan ?

CASYAPA.

All power to him, whereof
The disembodied spirit in its state
Of weakness could be made participant,
Kehama hath assign'd, until his days
Of wandering shall be number'd.

ERENIA.

Look ! she drinks
The gale of healing from the blessed Groves.
She stirs, and lo ! her hand
Hath touch'd the Holy River in its source,
Who would have shrunk if aught impure were nigh.

CASYAPA.

The Maiden, of a truth, is pure from sin.

The waters of the Holy Spring
About the hand of Kailyal play ;
They rise, they sparkle, and they sing,
Leaping where languidly she lay,
As if with that rejoicing stir
The Holy Spring would welcome her.
The tree of life which o'er her spread.
Benignant bow'd its sacred head,
And dropt its dews of healing ;
And her heart-blood at every breath,
Recovering from the strife of death,
Drew in new strength and feeling.
Behold her beautiful in her repose,
A life bloom reddening now her dark-brown cheek ;
And lo ! her eyes unclose,
Dark as the depth of Ganges' spring profound
When night hangs over it,
Bright as the moon's refulgent beam,
That quivers on its clear up-sparkling stream.

Soon she let fall her lids,
As one who, from a blissful dream
Waking to thoughts of pain,
Fain would return to sleep, and dream again.

Distrustful of the sight,
She moves not, fearing to disturb
The deep and full delight.
In wonder fix'd, opening again her eye
She gazes silently,
Thinking her mortal pilgrimage was past,
That she had reach'd her heavenly home of rest,
And these were Gods before her,
Or spirits of the blest.

Lo ! at Ereenia's voice,
A Ship of Heaven comes sailing down the skies.
Where would'st thou bear her ? cries
The ancient Sire of Gods.
Straight to the Swerga, to my bower of bliss,
The Glendoveer replies,
To Indra's own abodes.
Foe of her foe, were it alone for this
Indra should guard her from his vengeance there ;
But if the God forbear,
Unwilling yet the perilous strife to try,
Or shrinking from the dreadful Rajah's might, . . .
Weak as I am, O Father, even I
Stand forth in Seeva's sight.

Trust thou in him whate'er betide,
And stand forth fearlessly !
The sire of Gods replied :
All that He wills is right, and doubt not thou,
Howe'er our feeble scope of sight
May fail us now,
His righteous will in all things must be done.
My blessing be upon thee, O my son !

[In the Ship of Heaven Kailyal is borne into the presence of Indra.]

EREENIA.

Hear me, O Indra ! On the lower earth
I found this child of man, by what mishap
I know not, lying in the lap of death.
Aloft I bore her to our Father's grove,
Not having other thought, than when the gales
Of bliss had heal'd her, upon earth again
To leave its lovely daughter. Other thoughts
Arose, when Casyapa declared her fate ;
For she is one who groans beneath the power
Of the dread Rajah, terrible alike
To men and Gods. His son, dead Arvalan,
Arm'd with a portion, Indra, of thy power,
Already wrested from thee, persecutes
The Maid, the helpless one, the innocent.
What then behoved me but to waft her here
To my own Bower of Bliss? what other choice?
The Spirit of foul Arvalan not yet
Hath power to enter here ; here thou art yet
Supreme, and yet the Swerga is thine own.

INDRA.

No child of man, Ereenia, in the Bowers
Of Bliss may sojourn, till he hath put off
His mortal part ; for on mortality
Time and Infirmary and Death attend,
Close followers they, and in their mournful train
Sorrow and Pain and Mutability.
Did these find entrance here, we should behold
Our joys, like earthly summers, pass away.
Those joys perchance may pass ; a stronger hand
May wrest my sceptre, and unparadise

The Swerga ; . . . but, Ereenia, if we fall,
Let it be Fate's own arm that casts us down :
We will not rashly hasten and provoke
The blow, nor bring ourselves the ruin on.

EREENIA.

Fear courts the blow, Fear brings the ruin on.
Needs must the chariot-wheels of Destiny
Crush him who throws himself before their track,
Patient and prostrate.

INDRA.

All may yet be well.
Who knows but Veeshnoo will descend and save,
Once more incarnate ?

EREENIA.

Look not there for help,
Nor build on unsubstantial hope thy trust.
Our Father Casyapa hath said he turns
His doubtful eye to Seeva, even as thou
Dost look to him for aid. But thine own strength
Should for thine own salvation be put forth ;
Then might the higher Powers approving see
And bless the brave resolve . . . Oh, that my arm
Could wield yon lightnings which play idly there,
In inoffensive radiance round thy head !
The Swerga should not need a champion now,
Nor Earth implore deliverance still in vain !

INDRA.

Thinkest thou I want the will ? Rash son of Heaven,
What if my arm be feeble as thine own

Against the dread Kehama? He went on
Conquering in irresistible career,
Till his triumphant car had measured o'er
The insufficient earth, and all the Kings
Of men received his yoke; then had he won
His will, to ride upon their necks elate,
And crown his conquests with the sacrifice
That should, to men and gods, proclaim him Lord
And Sovereign Master of the vassal World,
Sole Rajah, the Omnipotent below.
The steam of that portentous sacrifice
Arose to Heaven. Then was the hour to strike;
Then in the consummation of his pride,
His height of glory, then the thunder-bolt
Should have gone forth, and hurled him from his throne
Down to the fiery floor of Padalon,
To everlasting burnings, agony
Eternal, and remorse which knows no end.
That hour went by: grown impious in success,
By prayer and penances he wrested now
Such power from Fate, that soon, if Seeva turn not
His eyes on earth, and no Avatar save,
Soon will he seize the Swerga for his own,
Roll on through Padalon his chariot wheels,
Tear up the adamantine bolts which lock
The accurst Asuras to its burning floor,
And force the drink of Immortality
From Yamen's charge . . . Vain were it now to strive;
My thunder cannot pierce the sphere of power
Wherewith, as with a girdle, he is bound.

KAILYAL.

Take me to earth, O gentle Deveta!
Take me again to earth! This is no place
Of rest for me! . . . my Father still must bear
His curse . . . he shall not bear it all alone;

Take me to earth, that I may follow him ! . . .
I do not fear the Almighty Man ! the Gods
Are feeble here ; but there are higher Powers
Who will not turn their eyes from wrongs like ours ;
Take me to earth, O gentle Deveta ! . . .

Saying thus she knelt, and to his knees she clung
And bow'd her head, in tears and silence praying.
Rising anon, around his neck she flung
Her arms, and there with folded hands she hung,
And fixing on the guardian Glendoveer
Her eyes, more eloquent than Angel's tongue,
Again she cried, There is no comfort here !
I must be with my Father in his pain . . .
Take me to earth, O Deveta, again !

Indra with admiration heard the Maid.
O Child of Earth, he cried,
Already in thy spirit thus divine,
Whatever weal or woe betide,
Be that high sense of duty still thy guide,
And all good Powers will aid a soul like thine.
Then turning to Ereenia, thus he said,
Take her where Ganges hath its second birth,
Below our sphere, and yet above the earth ;
There may Ladurlad rest beyond the power
Of the dread Rajah, till the fated hour.

VIII.

THE SACRIFICE.

Dost thou tremble, O Indra, O God of the Sky,
Why slumber those thunders of thine ?

THE CURSE OF KEHAMA.

Dost thou tremble on high, . . .
Wilt thou tamely the Swerga resign, . . .
Art thou smitten, O Indra, with dread?
Or seest thou not, seest thou not, Monarch divine,
How many a day to Seeva's shrine
Kehama his victim hath led?
Nine and ninety days are fled,
Nine and ninety steeds have bled;
One more, the rite will be complete,
One victim more, and this the dreadful day.
Then will the impious Rajah seize thy seat,
And wrest the thunder-sceptre from thy sway.
Along the mead the hallow'd Steed
Yet bends at liberty his way;
At noon his consummating blood will flow.
O day of woe! above, below,
That blood confirms the Almighty Tyrant's reign!
Thou tremblest, O Indra, O God of the Sky,
Thy thunder is vain,
Thou tremblest on high for thy power!
But where is Veeshnoo at this hour,
But where is Seeva's eye?
Is the Destroyer blind?
Is the Preserver careless for mankind?

Along the mead the hallow'd Steed
Still wanders wheresoe'er he will,
O'er hill, or dale, or plain;
No human hand hath trick'd that mane
From which he shakes the morning dew;
His mouth has never felt the rein,
His lips have never froth'd the chain;
For pure of blemish and of stain,
His neck unbroke to mortal yoke,
Like Nature free the Steed must be,
Fit offering for the Immortals he.

A year and day the Steed must stray
Wherever chance may guide his way,
Before he fall at Seeva's shrine ;
The year and day have pass'd away,
Nor touch of man hath marr'd the rite divine.
And now at noon the Steed must bleed,
The perfect right to-day must force the meed.
Which Fate reluctant shudders to bestow ;
Then must the Swerga-God
Yield to the Tyrant of the world below ;
Then must the Devetas obey
The Rajah's rod, and groan beneath his hateful sway.

The Sun rides high ; the hour is nigh ;
The multitude who long,
Lest aught should mar the rite,
In circle wide on every side,
Have kept the Steed in sight,
Contract their circle now, and drive him on.
Drawn in long files before the Temple-court,
The Rajah's archers flank an ample space ;
Here, moving onward still, they drive him near,
Then, opening, give him way to enter here.

Behold him, how he starts and flings his head !
On either side in glittering order spread,
The archers ranged in narrowing lines appear ;
The multitude behind close up the rear
With moon-like bend, and silently await
The awful end,
The rite that shall from Indra wrest his power.
In front, with far-stretched walls, and many a tower,
Turret and dome and pinnacle elate,
The huge Pagoda seems to load the land :
And there before the gate

THE CURSE OF KEHAMA.

The Bramin band expectant stand,
The axe is ready for Kehama's hand.

Hark ! at the Golden Palaces
The Bramin strikes the time !
One, two, three, four, a thrice-told chime,
And then again, one, two.
The bowl that in its vessel floats, anew
Must fill and sink again,
Then will the final stroke be due.
The Sun rides high, the noon is nigh,
And silently, as if spell bound,
The multitude expect the sound.

Lo ! how the Steed, with sudden start,
Turns his quick head to every part ;
Long files of men on every side appear.
The sight might well his heart affright,
And yet the silence that is here
Inspires a stranger fear ;
For not a murmur, not a sound
Of breath or motion rises round,
No stir is heard in all that mighty crowd ;
He neighs, and from the temple-wall
The voice re-echoes loud,
Loud and distinct, as from a hill
Across a lonely vale, when all is still.

Within the temple, on his golden throne
Reclined, Kehama lies,
Watching with steady eyes
The perfumed light that, burning bright,
Metes out the passing hours.
On either hand his eunuchs stand,
Freshening with fans of peacock-plumes the air,
Which, redolent of all rich gums and flowers,

Seems, overcharged with sweets, to stagnate there.

Lo ! the time-taper's flame ascending slow

Creeps up its coil toward the fated line ;

Kehama rises and goes forth,

And from the altar, ready where it lies,

He takes the axe of sacrifice.

That instant from the crowd, with sudden shout,

A Man sprang out

To lay upon the Steed his hand profane.

A thousand archers, with unerring eye,

At once let fly,

And with their hurling arrows fill the sky.

In vain they fall upon him fast as rain ;

He bears a charmed life, which may defy

All weapons, . . . and the darts that whizz around,

As from an adamantine panoply

Repell'd, fall idly to the ground.

Kehama clasp'd his hands in agony

And saw him grasp the hallow'd courser's mane,

Spring up with sudden bound,

And with a frantic cry,

And madman's gesture, gallop round and round.

They seize, they drag him to the Rajah's feet.

What doom will now be his, . . . what vengeance meet

Will he, who knows no mercy, now require ?

The obsequious guards around, with blood-hound eye,

Look for the word, in slow consuming fire,

By piece-meal death, to make the wretch expire,

Or hoist his living carcass, hook'd on high,

To feed the fowls and insects of the sky ;

Or if aught worse inventive cruelty

To that remorseless heart of royalty

Might prompt, accursed instruments they stand

To work the wicked will with wicked hand.

Far other thoughts were in the multitude ;
Pity, and human feelings, held them still ;
And stifled sighs and groans suppress were there,
And many a secret curse and inward prayer
Call'd on the insulted Gods to save mankind.
Expecting some new crime, in fear they stood,
Some horror which would make the natural blood
Start, with cold shudderings thrill the sinking heart,
Whiten the lip, and make the abhorrent eye
Roll back and close, prest in for agony.

How then fared he for whom the mighty crowd
Suffer'd in sprit thus, . . . how then fared he ?
A ghastly smile was on his lip, his eye
Glared with a ghastly hope, as he drew nigh,
And cried aloud, Yes, Rajah ! it is I !
And wilt thou kill me now ?
The countenance of the Almighty Man
Fell when he knew Ladurlad, and his brow
Was clouded with despite, as one ashamed.
That wretch again ! indignant he exclaim'd,
And smote his forehead, and stood silently
Awhile in wrath : then, with ferocious smile,
And eyes which seem'd to darken his dark cheek,
Let him go free ! he cried ; he hath the Curse,
And vengeance upon him can wreak no worse . . .
But ye who did not stop him . . . tremble ye !

He bade the archers pile their weapons there :
No manly courage fill'd the slavish band,
No sweetening vengeance roused a brave despair,
He call'd his horsemen then, and gave command
To hem the offenders in, and hew them down.
Ten thousand scymitars at once uprear'd,
Flash up, like waters sparkling to the sun ;
A second time the fatal brands appear'd

Lifted aloft, . . . they glitter'd then no more,
Their light was gone, their splendour quench'd in gore.
At noon the massacre begun,
And night closed in before the work of death was done.

IX.

THE HOME SCENE.

THE steam of slaughter from that place of blood
Spread o'er the tainted sky.
Vultures, for whom the Rajah's tyranny
So oft had furnish'd food, from far and nigh
Sped to the lure ; aloft with joyful cry,
Wheeling around, they hover'd over head ;
Or, on the temple perch'd, with greedy eye,
Impatient watch'd the dead.
Far off the tigers, in the inmost wood,
Heard the death shriek, and snuff'd the scent of blood :
They rose, and through the covert went their way,
Couch'd at the forest edge, and waited for their prey.

He who had sought for death went wandering on,
The hope which had inspired his heart was gone,
Yet a wild joyance still inflamed his face,
A smile of vengeance, a triumphant glow,
Where goes he? . . . Where should Ladurlad go !
Unwittingly the wretch's footsteps trace
Their wonted path towards his dwelling place ;
And wandering on, unknowing where,
He starts as one surprised at finding he is there.

Behold his lowly home,
By yonder broad-bough'd plane o'ershaded :

There Marriataly's Image stands,
And there the garland twined by Kailyal's hands
Around its brow hath faded.
The peacocks, at their master's sight,
Quick from the leafy thatch alight,
And hurry round, and search the ground,
And veer their glancing necks from side to side,
Expecting from his hand
Their daily dole which erst the Maid supplied,
Now all too long denied.

But as he gazed around,
How strange did all accustom'd sights appear ;
How differently did each familiar sound
Assail his alter'd ear !
How stood the marriage bower,
Rear'd in that happy hour
When he, with festal joy and youthful pride,
Had brought Yedillian home, his beauteous bride ;
Leaves not its own, and many a borrow'd flower,
Had then bedeck'd it, withering ere the night ;
But he who look'd from that auspicious day
For years of long delight,
And would not see the marriage bower decay,
There planted and nurst up, with daily care,
The sweetest herbs that scent the ambient air,
And train'd them round to live and flourish there.
Nor when dread Yamen's will
Had called Yedillian from his arms away,
Ceased he to attend the marriage bower, but still,
Sorrowing, had drest it like a pious rite
Due to the monument of past delight.

He took his wonted seat before the door, . . .
Even as of yore,
When he was wont to view with placid eyes,

His daughter at her evening sacrifice.
Here were the flowers which she so carefully
Did love to rear for Marriataly's brow ;
Neglected now,
Their heavy heads were drooping, overblown :
All else appear'd the same as heretofore,
All save himself alone ;
How happy then, . . . and now a wretch for evermore !

The market-flag which hoisted high,
From far and nigh,
Above yon cocoa grove is seen,
Hangs motionless amid the sultry sky.
Loud sounds the village drum ; a happy crowd
Is there ; Ladurlad hears their distant voices,
And with their joy no more his heart rejoices ;
And how their old companion now may fare,
Little they know, and less they care :
The torment he is doom'd to bear
Was but to them the wonder of a day,
A burthen of sad thoughts soon put away.

They knew not that the wretched man was near,
And yet it seem'd, to his distemper'd ear,
As if they wrong'd him with their merriment.
Resentfully he turn'd away his eyes,
Yet turn'd them but to find
Sights that enraged his mind
With envious grief more wild and overpowering.
The tank which fed his fields was there, and there
The large-leaved lotus on the waters flowering.
There, from the intolerable heat
The buffaloes retreat ;
Only their nostrils raised to meet the air,
Amid the sheltering element they rest.
Impatient of the sight, he closed his eyes,

And bow'd his burning head, and in despair
Calling on Indra, . . . Thunder-God ! he said,
Thou owest to me alone this day thy throne,
Be grateful, and in mercy strike me dead.
Despair had roused him to that hopeless prayer,
Yet thinking on the heavenly Powers, his mind
Drew comfort ; and he rose and gather'd flowers,
And twined a crown for Marriataly's brow ;
And taking then her wither'd garland down,
Replaced it with the blooming coronal.
Not for myself, the unhappy father cried,
Not for myself, O Mighty One, I pray,
Accursed as I am beyond thy aid !
But, oh ! be gracious still to that dear Maid
Who crown'd thee with these garlands day by day,
And danced before thee aye at even-tide
In beauty and in pride.
O Marriataly, wheresoe'er she stray
Forlorn and wretched, still be thou her guide !

A loud and fiendish laugh replied,
Scoffing his prayer. Aloft, as from the air,
The sound of insult came : he look'd, and there
The visage of dead Arvalan came forth,
Only his face amid the clear blue sky,
With long-drawn lips of insolent mockery,
And eyes whose lurid glare
Was like a sulphur fire,
Mingling with darkness ere its flames expire.

Ladurlad knew him well : enraged to see
The cause of all his misery,
He stoop'd and lifted from the ground
A stake, whose fatal point was black with blood ;
The same wherewith his hand had dealt the wound,
When Arvalan, in hour with evil fraught,

For violation seized the shrieking Maid,
Thus arm'd, in act again to strike he stood,
And twice with inefficient wrath essay'd
To smite the impassive shade.
The lips of scorn their mockery-laugh renew'd,
And Arvalan put forth a hand and caught
The sunbeam, and condensing there its light,
Upon Ladurlad turn'd the burning stream.
Vain cruelty ! the stake
Fell in white ashes from his hold, but he
Endured no added pain ; his agony
Was full, and at the height ;
The burning stream of radiance nothing harm'd him ;
A fire was in his heart and brain,
And from all other flame
Kehama's Curse had charm'd him.

Anon the Spirit waved a second hand ;
Down rush'd the obedient whirlwind from the sky,
Scoop'd up the sand like smoke, and from on high,
Shed the hot shower upon Ladurlad's head.
Where'er he turns, the accursed Hand is there ;
East, West, and North, and South, on every side
The Hand accursed waves in air to guide
The dizzying storm ; ears, nostrils, eyes, and mouth
It fills and choaks, and clogging every pore,
Taught him new torments might be yet in store.
Where shall he turn to fly ? behold his house
In flames ! uprooted lies the marriage-bower,
The Goddess buried by the sandy shower.
Blindly, with staggering step, he reels about,
And still the accursed Hand pursued,
And still the lips of scorn their mockery-laugh renew'd,

What, Arvalan ! hast thou so soon forgot
The grasp of Pollear ? Wilt thou still defy

The righteous Powers of Heaven? or know'st thou not
That there are yet superior Powers on high,
Son of the Wicked? . . . Lo, in rapid flight,
Ereenia hastens from the etherial height,
Bright is the sword celestial in his hand ;
Like lightning in its path athwart the sky,
He comes and drives, with angel-arm, the blow.
Oft have the Asuras, in the wars of Heaven,
Felt that keen sword by arm angelic driven,
And fled before it from the fields of light.
Thrice through the vulnerable shade
The Glendoveer impels the griding blade,
The wicked Shade flies howling from his foe.
So let that Spirit foul
Fly, and for impotence of anger, howl,
Writhing with anguish, and his wounds deplore ;
Worse punishment hath Arvalan deserved,
And righteous Fate hath heavier doom in store.

Not now the Glendoveer pursues his flight ;
He bade the Ship of Heaven alight,
And gently there he laid
The astonish'd Father by the happy Maid,
The Maid now shedding tears of deep delight.
Beholding all things with incredulous eyes,
Still dizzy with the sand-storm, there he lay,
While sailing up the skies, the living Bark
Through air and sunshine held its heavenly way.

X.

MOUNT-MERU.

SWIFT through the sky the vessel of the Suras
Sails up the fields of ether like an Angel.

Rich is the freight, O Vessel, that thou bearest !
Beauty and Virtue,
Fatherly cares and filial veneration,
Hearts which are proved and strengthen'd by affliction.
Manly resentment, fortitude and action,
Womanly goodness ;
All with which Nature halloweth her daughters,
Tenderness, truth, and purity and meekness,
Piety, patience, faith, and resignation,
Love and devotement.
Ship of the Gods, how richly art thou laden !
Proud of the charge, thou voyagest rejoicing,
Clouds float around to honour thee, and Evening
Lingers in heaven.

A Stream descends on Meru mountain ;
None hath seen its secret fountain :
It had its birth, so Sages say,
Upon the memorable day
When Parvati presumed to lay,
In wanton play,
Her hands, too venturous Goddess, in her mirth,
On Seeva's eyes, the light and life of Earth
Thereat the heart of the Universe stood still :
The Elements ceased their influences ; the Hours
Stopt on the eternal round ; Motion and Breath,
Time, Change, and Life and Death,
In sudden trance opprest, forgot their powers.
A moment, and the dread eclipse was ended ;
But at the thought of Nature thus suspended,
The sweat on Seeva's forehead stood,
And Ganges thence upon the world descended,
The Holy River, the Redeeming Flood.

None hath seen its secret fountain ;
But on the top of Meru Mountain

THE CURSE OF KEHAMA.

Which rises o'er the hills of earth.
In light and clouds, it hath its mortal birth.
Earth seems that pinnacle to rear
Sublime above this worldly sphere,
Its cradle, and its altar, and its throne ;
And there the new-born River lies
Outspread beneath its native skies,
As if it there would love to dwell
Alone and unapproachable.
Soon flowing forward, and resign'd
To the will of the Creating Mind,
It springs at once, with sudden leap,
Down from the immeasurable steep.
From rock to rock, with shivering force rebounding,
The mighty cataract rushes ; Heaven around,
Like thunder, with the incessant roar resounding,
And Meru's summit shaking with the sound.
Wide spreads the snowy foam, the sparkling spray
Dances aloft ; and ever there at morning
The earliest sunbeams haste to wing their way,
With rainbow wreaths the holy stream adorning ;
And duly the adoring Moon at night
Sheds her white glory there,
And in the watery air
Suspends her halo-crowns of silver light.

A mountain-valley in its blessed breast
Receives the stream, which there delights to lie,
Untroubled and at rest
Beneath the untainted sky.
There in a lovely lake it seems to sleep,
And thence through many a channel dark and deep,
Their secret way the holy Waters wind,
Till, rising underneath the root
Of the Tree of Life on Hemakoot,
Majestic forth they flow to purify mankind.

Towards this Lake, above the nether sphere,
The living Bark with angel eye
Directs its course along the obedient sky,
Kehama hath not yet dominion here ;
And till the dreaded hour,
When Indra by the Rajah shall be driven
Dethroned from Heaven,
Here may Ladurlad rest beyond his power.

The living Bark alights ; the Glendoveer
Then lays Ladurlad by the blessed Lake ; . . .
O happy Sire, and yet more happy Daughter !
The ethereal gales his agony aslake,
His daughter's tears are on his cheek,
His hand is in the water ;
The innocent man, the man opprest,
Oh joy ! . . . hath found a place of rest
Beyond Kehema's sway ;
The curse extends not here ; his pains have pass'd away.

O happy Sire, and happy Daughter !
Ye on the banks of the celestial water
Your resting place and sanctuary have found.
What ! hath not then their mortal taint defiled
The sacred solitary ground ?
Vain thought ! the Holy Valley smiled
Receiving such a Sire and Child ;
Ganges, who seem'd asleep to lie,
Beheld them with benignant eye,
And rippled round melodiously,
And roll'd her little waves, to meet
And welcome their beloved feet.
The gales of Swerga thither fled,
And heavenly odours there were shed

About, below, and overhead ;
And Earth rejoicing in their tread.
Hath built them up a blooming Bower,
Where every amaranthine flower
Its deathless blossom interweaves
With bright and undecaying leaves.

Three happy beings are there here,
The Sire, the Maid, the Glendoveer.
A fourth approaches, . . . who is this
That enters in the Bower of Bliss?
No form so fair might painter find
Among the daughters of mankind ;
For death her beauties hath refined,
And unto her a form hath given
Framed of the elements of Heaven ;
Pure dwelling place for perfect mind.
She stood and gazed on Sire and Child ;
Her tongue not yet had power to speak,
The tears were streaming down her cheek ;
And when those tears her sight beguiled,
And still her faltering accents fail'd,
The Spirit, mute and motionless,
Spread out her arms for the caress,
Made still and silent with excess
Of love and painful happiness.

The Maid that lovely form survey'd ;
Wistful she gazed, and knew her not,
But Nature to her heart convey'd
A sudden thrill, a startling thought,
A feeling many a year forgot,
Now like a dream anew recurring,
As if again in every vein

Her mother's milk was stirring.
With straining neck and earnest eye
She stretch'd her hands imploringly,
As if she fain would have her nigh,
Yet fear'd to meet the wish'd embrace,
At once with love and awe opprest.
Not so Ladurlad ; he could trace,
Though brighten'd with angelic grace,
His own Yedillian's earthly face ;
He ran and held her to his breast !
Oh joy above all joys of Heaven,
By Death alone to others given,
This moment hath to him restored
The early-lost, the long-deplored.

They sin who tell us Love can die.
With life all other passions fly,
All others are but vanity.
In Heaven Ambition cannot dwell,
Nor Avarice in the vaults of Hell ;
Earthly these passions of the Earth,
They perish where they have their birth ;
But Love is indestructible.
Its holy flame for ever burneth,
From Heaven it came, to Heaven returneth ;
Too oft on Earth a troubled guest,
At times deceived, at times opprest,
It here is tried and purified,
Then hath in Heaven its perfect rest :
It soweth here with toil and care,
But the harvest time of Love is there.

Oh ! when a Mother meets on high
The Babe she lost in infancy,
Hath she not then, for pains and fears,
The day of woe, the watchful night,

For all her sorrow, all her tears,
An over-payment of delight ?

A blessed family is this
Assembled in the bower of Bliss !
Strange woe, Ladurlad, hath been thine,
And pangs beyond all human measure,
And thy reward is now divine,
A foretaste of eternal pleasure.
He knew indeed there was a day
When all these joys would pass away,
And he must quit this blest abode ;
And, taking up again the spell,
Groan underneath the baleful load,
And wander o'er the world again
Most wretched of the sons of men :
Yet was this brief repose, as when
A traveller in the Arabian sands,
Half-fainting on his sultry road,
Hath reach'd the water-place at last ;
And resting there beside the well,
Thinks of the perils he has past,
And gazes o'er the unbounded plain,
The plain which must be traversed still,
And drinks, . . . yet cannot drink his fill ;
Then girds his patient loins again.
So to Ladurlad now was given
New strength, and confidence in heaven,
And hope, and faith invincible.

For often would Ereenia tell
Of what in elder days befell,
When other Tyrants in their might,
Usurp'd dominion o'er the earth ;
And Veeshnoo took a human birth,
Deliverer of the Sons of men,

And slew the huge Ermaccasen,
And piece-meal rent, with lion force,
Errenen's accursed corse,
And humbled Baly in his pride ;
And when the Giant Ravanen
Had borne triumphant from his side
Sita, the earth-born God's beloved bride,
Then from the island-kingdom, laugh'd to scorn
The insulted husband, and his power defied ;
How to revenge the wrong in wrath he hied,
Bridging the sea before his dreadful way,
And met the hundred-headed foe,
And dealt him the unerring blow ;
By Brama's hand the righteous lance was given,
And by that arm immortal driven,
It laid the mighty Tyrant low ;
And Earth and Ocean, and high Heaven,
Rejoiced to see his overthrow.
Oh ! doubt not thou, Yedillian cried,
Such fate Kehema will betide ;
For there are Gods who look below, . . .
Seeva, the Avenger, is not blind,
Nor Veeshnoo careless for mankind.

Thus was Ladurlad's soul imbued
With hope and holy fortitude ;
And Child and Sire, with pious mind,
Alike resolved, alike resign'd,
Look'd onward to the evil day :
Faith was their comfort, Faith their stay ;
They trusted woe would pass away,
And Tyranny would sink subdued,
And Evil yield to Good.

XII.

THE SACRIFICE COMPLETED.

O YE who, by the Lake
On Meru Mount, partake
The joys which Heaven hath destined for the blest,
Swift, swift, the moments fly,
The silent hours go by,
And ye must leave your dear abode of rest,
O wretched Man, prepare
Again thy Curse to bear !
Prepare, O wretched Maid, for farther woe !
The fatal hour draws near,
When Indra's heavenly sphere
Must own the Tyrant of the World below.
To-day the hundredth Steed,
At Seeva's shrine must bleed,
The dreadful sacrifice is full to-day ;
Nor man nor God hath power,
At this momentous hour,
Again to save the Swerga from his sway.
Fresh woes, O Maid divine,
Fresh trials must be thine :
And what must thou, Ladurlad, yet endure !
But let your hearts be strong,
And rise against all wrong,
For Providence is just, and virtue is secure.

They, little deeming that the fatal day
Was come, beheld where through the morning sky
A Ship of Heaven drew nigh.
Onward they watch it steer its steady flight ;
Till wondering, they espy
Old Casyapa, the Sire of Gods, alight.

But when Ereenia saw the Sire appear,
At that unwonted and unwelcome sight
His heart received a sudden shock of fear ;
Thy presence doth its doleful tidings tell,
O Father ! cried the startled Glendoveer,
The dreadful hour is near ! I know it well !
Not for less import would the Sire of Gods
Forsake his ancient and august abodes.

Even so, serene the immortal Sire replies ;
Soon like an earthquake will ye feel the blow
Which consummates the mighty sacrifice :
And this World, and its Heaven, and all therein,
Are then Kehama's. To the second ring
Of these seven Spheres, the Swerga-King,
Even now, prepares for flight,
Beyond the circle of the conquer'd world,
Beyond the Rajah's might.
Ocean, that clips this inmost of the Spheres,
And girds it round with everlasting roar,
Set like a gem appears
Within that bending shore.
Thither fly all the Sons of heavenly race :
I too forsake mine ancient dwelling-place.
And now, O Child and Father, ye must go :
Take up the burthen of your woe,
And wander once again below.
With patient heart hold onward to the end, . . .
Be true unto yourselves, and bear in mind
That every God is still the good Man's friend ;
And when the Wicked have their day assign'd,
Then they who suffer bravely save mankind.

Oh tell me, cried Ereenia, for from thee
Nought can be hidden, when the end will be !

THE CURSE OF KEHAMA.

Seek not to know, old Casyapa replied,
What pleaseth Heaven to hide.

Dark is the abyss of Time,
But light enough to guide your steps is given ;
Whatever weal or woe betide,

Turn never from the way of truth aside,
And leave the event, in holy hope, to Heaven.

The moment is at hand, no more delay,
Ascend the etherial bark, and go your way ;
And Ye, of heavenly nature, follow me.

The will of Heaven be done, Ladurlad cried,
Nor more the man replied ;
But placed his daughter in the etherial bark,
Then took his seat beside.

There was no word at parting, no adieu.
Down from that empyreal height they flew ;
One groan Ladurlad breathed, yet utter'd not,
When, to his heart and brain,

The fiery Curse again like lightning shot.
And now on earth the Sire and Child alight,
Up soar'd the Ship of Heaven, and sail'd away from
sight.

O ye immortal Bowers,
Where hitherto the Hours
Have led their dance of happiness for aye,
With what a sense of woe
Do ye expect the blow,
And see your heavenly dwellers driven away !
Lo ! where the aunnay-birds of graceful mien,
Whose milk-white forms were seen,
Lovely as Nymphs, your ancient trees between,
And by your silent springs,
With melancholy cry

Now spread unwilling wings ;
Their stately necks reluctant they protend,
And through the sullen sky,
To other worlds, their mournful progress bend.

The affrighted gales to-day
O'er their beloved streams no longer play,
The streams of Paradise have ceased to flow ;
The Fountain-Tree withholds its diamond shower,
In this portentous hour, . . .
This dolorous hour, . . . this universal woe.
Where is the Palace, whose far-flashing beams,
With streaks and streams of ever-varying light,
Brighten'd the polar night
Around the frozen North's extremest shore ?
Gone like a morning rainbow, . . . like a dream, . . .
A star that shoots and falls, and then is seen no more.

Now ! now ! . . . Before the Golden Palaces,
The Bramin strikes the inevitable hour.
The fatal blow is given,
That over Earth and Heaven
Confirms the Almighty Rajah in his power.
All evil Spirits then,
That roam the World about,
Or wander through the sky,
Set up a joyful shout.
The Asuras and the Giants join the cry ;
The damn'd in Padalon acclaim
Their hoped Deliverer's name ;
Heaven trembles with the thunder-drowning sound ;
Back starts affrighted Ocean from the shore,
And the adamantine vaults and brazen floor
Of Hell are shaken with the roar.

Up rose the Rajah through the conquer'd sky,
To seize the Swerga for his proud abode ;
Myriads of evil Genii round him fly,
As royally on wings of winds he rode,
And scaled high Heaven, triumphant like a God.

XIII.

THE RETREAT.

AROUND her Father's neck the Maiden lock'd
Her arms, when that portentous blow was given ;
Clinging to him she heard the dread uproar,
And felt the shuddering shock which ran through
Heaven :
Earth underneath them rock'd,
Her strong foundations heaving in commotion,
Such as wild winds upraise in raving Ocean,
As though the solid base were rent asunder.
And lo ! where, storming the astonish'd sky,
Kehama and his evil host ascend !
Before them rolls the thunder,
Ten thousand thousand lightnings round them fly,
Upward the lengthening pageantries aspire,
Leaving from Earth to Heaven a widening wake of fire.

'Twas a fair scene wherein they stood,
A green and sunny glade amid the wood,
And in the midst an aged Banian grew.
It was a goodly sight to see
That venerable tree,
For o'er the lawn, irregularly spread,
Fifty straight columns propt its lofty head ;
And many a long depending shoot,
Seeking to strike its root,

Straight like a plummet, grew towards the ground.
Some on the lower boughs which crost their way,
Fixing their bearded fibres, round and round,
With many a ring and wild contortion wound ;
Some to the passing wind at times, with sway
Of gentle motion swung ;

Others of younger growth, unmoved, were hung
Like stone-drops from the cavern's fretted height ;

Beneath was smooth and fair to sight,
Nor weeds nor briars deform'd the natural floor,
And through the leafy cope which bower'd it o'er
Came gleams of chequer'd light.

So like a temple did it seem, that there
A pious heart's first impulse would be prayer.

A brook, with easy current, murmur'd near ;
Water so cool and clear

The peasants drink not from the humble well,

Which they with sacrifice of rural pride,
Have wedded to the cocoa-grove beside ;

Nor tanks of costliest masonry dispense
To those in towns who dwell,

The work of Kings, in their beneficence.

Fed by perpetual springs, a small lagoon,

Pellucid, deep, and still, in silence join'd

And swell'd the passing stream. Like burnish'd steel

Glowing, it lay beneath the eye of noon ;

And when the breezes in their play,
Ruffled the darkening surface, then with gleam

Of sudden light, around the lotus stem

It rippled, and the sacred flowers that crown

The lakelet with their roseate beauty, ride

In easy waving rock'd, from side to side ;

And as the wind upheaves

Their broad and buoyant weight, the glossy leaves

Flap on the twinkling waters, up and down.

THE CURSE OF KEHAMA.

They built them here a bower, of jointed cane,
Strong for the needful use, and light and long
Was the slight framework rear'd, with little pain ;
Lithe creepers, then, the wicker sides supply,
And the tall jungle-grass fit roofing gave
Beneath the genial sky.

And here did Kailyal, each returning day,
Pour forth libations from the brook to pay
The Spirits of her Sires their grateful rite ;
In such libations pour'd in open glades,
Besides clear streams and solitary shades,
The Spirits of the virtuous dead delight.
And duly here, to Marriataly's praise,
The Maid, as with an angel's voice of song,
Poured her melodious lays
Upon the gales of even,
And gliding in religious dance along,
Moved graceful as the dark-eyed Nymphs of Heaven,
Such harmony to all her steps was given.

Such strength the will reveal'd had given
This holy pair, such influxes of grace,
That to their solitary resting place
They brought the peace of Heaven.
Yea, all around was hallow'd ! Danger, Fear,
Nor thought of evil ever enter'd here.
A charm was on the Leopard when he came
Within the circle of that mystic glade ;
Submiss he crouch'd before the heavenly maid,
And offer'd to her touch his speckled side ;
Or with arch'd back erect, and bending head,
And eyes half-closed for pleasure, would he stand,
Courting the pressure of her gentle hand.

Trampling his path through wood and brake,
And canes which crackling fall before his way,

THE CURSE OF KEHAMA.

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And tassel-grass, whose silvery feathers play
O'ertopping the young trees,
On comes the Elephant, to slake
His thirst at noon in yon pellucid springs.
Lo ! from his trunk upturn'd, aloft he flings
The grateful shower ; and now
Plucking the broad-leaved bough
Of yonder plane, with wavey motion slow,
Fanning the languid air,
He moves it to and fro.
But when that form of beauty meets his sight,
The trunk its undulating motion stops,
From his forgetful hold the plane-branch drops,
Reverent he kneels, and lifts his rational eyes
To her as if in prayer ;
And when she pours her angel voice in song,
Entranced he listens to the thrilling notes,
Till his strong temples, bathed with sudden dews,
Their fragrance of delight and love diffuse.

Lo ! as the voice melodious floats around,
The Antelope draws near,
The Tigress leaves her toothless cubs to hear ;
The Snake comes gliding from the secret brake,
Himself in fascination forced along
By that enchanting song ;
The antic Monkeys, whose wild gambols late,
When not a breeze waved the tall jungle grass,
Shook the whole wood, are hush'd, and silently
Hang on the cluster'd tree.
All things in wonder and delight are still ;
Only at times the Nightingale is heard,
Not that in emulous skill that sweetest bird
Her rival strain would try,
A mighty songster, with the Maid to vie ;
She only bore her part in powerful sympathy.

THE CURSE OF KEHAMA.

Well might they thus adore that heavenly Maid !
For never Nymph of Mountain,
Or Grove, or Lake, or Fountain,
With a diviner presence fill'd the shade.
No idle ornaments deface
Her natural grace,
Musk-spot, nor sandal-streak, nor scarlet stain,
Ear-drop nor chain, nor arm nor ankle-ring,
Nor trinketry on front, or neck, or breast,
Marring the perfect form : she seem'd a thing
Of Heaven's prime uncorrupted work, a child
Of early nature undefiled,
A daughter of the years of innocence.
And therefore all things loved her. When she stood
Beside the glassy pool, the fish, that flies
Quick as an arrow from all other eyes,
Hover'd to gaze on her. The mother bird,
When Kailyal's step she heard,
Sought not to tempt her from her secret nest,
But hastening to the dear retreat, would fly
To meet and welcome her benignant eye.

Fate work'd its own the while. A band
Of Yoguees, as they roam'd the land
Seeking a spouse for Jaga-Naut their God,
Stray'd to this solitary glade,
And reach'd the bower wherein the Maid abode.
Wondering at form so fair, they deem'd the Power
Divine had led them to his chosen bride,
And seized and bore her from her Father's side.

*[Attempting to save her from the Temple of Jaga-Naut
and its loathsome rites, the Glendoveer is overcome
by Arvalan and the evil spirits, and imprisoned*

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*in the ancient city of Baly beneath the ocean, nto
whose depths Ladurlad, protected from harm by the
Curse, penetrates to rescue him.]*

But if amid these Chambers drear,
Death were a sight of shuddering and of fear,
Life was a thing of stranger horror here.

For at the farther end, in yon alcove,
Where Baly should have lain, had he obey'd
Man's common lot, behold Ereenia laid.
Strong fetters link him to the rock ; his eye
Now rolls and widens, as with effort vain

He strives to break the chain,
Now seems to brood upon his misery.

Before him couch'd there lay
One of the mighty monsters of the deep,
Whom Lorrinite encountering on the way,
There station'd, his perpetual guard to keep ;
In the sport of wanton power, she charm'd him there,
As if to mock the Glendoveer's despair.

Upward his form was human, save that here
The skin was cover'd o'er with scale on scale
Compact, a panoply of natural mail.

His mouth, from ear to ear,
Weapon'd with triple teeth, extended wide,
And tusks on either side ;

A double snake below, he roll'd
His supple length behind in many a sinuous fold.

With red and kindling eye, the Beast behold's

A living man draw nigh,

And rising on his folds,

In hungry joys awaits the expected feast,

His mouth half-open, and his teeth unsheath'd.
 Then on he sprung, and in his scaly arms
 Seized him, and fasten'd on his neck, to suck,
 With greedy lips the warm life-blood : and sure
 But for the mighty power of magic charms,
 As easily as, in the blithesome hour
 Of spring, a child doth crop the meadow-flower,
 Piecemeal those claws
 Had rent their victim, and those armed jaws
 Snapt him in twain. Naked Ladurlad stood,
 Yet fearless and unharm'd in this dread strife,
 So well Kehama's Curse had charm'd his fated life.

He too, . . . for anger, rising at the sight
 Of him he sought, in such strange thrall confined,
 With desperate courage fired Ladurlad's mind, . . .
 He too unto the fight himself address,
 And grappling breast to breast,
 With foot firm-planted stands,
 And seized the monster's throat with both his hands.
 Vainly, with throttling grasp, he prest
 The impene-
 And lo ! the Guard round the whnd round his foe,
 With gliding motion, wney roanis lengthening coils,
 Then tighten'd all their Jaga-Nith stress and strain.
 Nought would the this solitager's strength avail
 If once involved whernose mighty toils ;
 The arm'd Rh'so fair, so clasp'd, in vain
 Had trusted them, side of rugged mail,
 His bones all bore he, and the breath of life
 Crush'd from t' . . . gs, in that unequal strife.
 Again, and again, he sought to break
 The impressive l' hgs ; but when the Monster found
 His utmost power was vain,
 A moment he relax'd in every round,

Then knit his coils again with closer strain,
And, bearing forward, forced him to the ground.

Ereenia groan'd in anguish at the sight
Of this dread fight : once more the Glendoveer
Essay'd to break his bonds, and fear
For that brave father who had sought him here,
Stung him to wilder strugglings. From the rock
He raised himself half-up, with might and main
Pluck'd at the adamantine chain,
And now with long and unrelaxing strain,
In obstinate effort of indignant strength,
Labour'd and strove in vain ;
Till his immortal sinews fail'd at length ;
And yielding, with an inward groan, to fate,
Despairingly, he let himself again
Fall prostrate on his prison-bed of stone,
Body and chain alike with lifeless weight.

Struggling they lay in mortal fray
All day, while day was in our upper sphere,
For light of day
And natural darkness never entered here ;
All night, with unabated might,
They waged the unremitting fight.
A second day, a second night,
With furious will they wrestled still.
The third came on, the fourth is gone ;
Another comes, another goes,
And yet no respite, no repose !
But day and night, and night and day,
Involv'd in mortal strife they lay ;
Six days and nights have pass'd away,
And still they wage, with mutual rage,

The unremitting fray.
With mutual rage their war they wage,
But not with mutual will ;
For when the seventh morning came,
The monster's worn and wearied frame
In this strange contest fails ;
And weaker, weaker, every hour,
He yields beneath strong Nature's power,
For now the Curse prevails.

Sometimes the Beast sprung up to bear
His foe aloft ; and trusting there
To shake him from his hold,
Relax'd the rings that wreath'd him round ;
But on his throat Ladurlad hung
And weigh'd him to the ground ;
And if they sink, or if they float,
Alike with stubborn clasp he clung,
Tenacious of his grasp ;
For well he knew with what a power,
Exempt from Nature's laws,
The Curse had arm'd him for this hour ;
And in the monster's gasping jaws,
And in his hollow eye,
Well could Ladurlad now descry
The certain signs of victory.

And now the Beast no more can keep
His painful watch ; his eyes, oppress'd,
Are fainting for their natural sleep ;
His living flesh and blood must rest,
The Beast must sleep or die.
Then he, full faint and languidly,
Unwreathes his rings and strives to fly,
And still retreating, slowly trails
His stiff and heavy length of scales.

But that unweariable foe,
With will relentless follows still ;
No breathing time, no pause of fight
He gives, but presses on his flight ;
Along the vaulted chambers, and the ascent
Up to the emerald-tinted light of day,
He harasses his way,
Till lifeless, underneath his grasp,
The huge Sea-Monster lay.

That obstinate work is done ; Ladurlad cried,
One labour yet remains ?
And thoughtfully he eyed
Ereenia's ponderous chains ;
And with faint effort, half-despairing, tried
The rivets deep in-driven. Instinctively,
As if in search of aid, he look'd around :
Oh, then how gladly, in the near alcove,
Fallen on the ground its lifeless Lord beside,
The crescent scymitar he spied,
Whose cloudy blade, with potent spells imbued,
Had lain so many an age unhurt in solitude.

Joyfully springing there
He seized the weapon, and with eager stroke
Hew'd at the chain ; the force was dealt in vain,
For not as if through yielding air
Pass'd the descending scymitar,
Its deaden'd way the heavy water broke ;
Yet it bit deep. Again, with both his hands,
He wields the blade, and dealt a surer blow.
The baser metals yields
To that fine edge, and lo ! the Glendoveer
Rises and snaps the half-sever'd links, and stands
Freed from his broken bands.

[*The Glendoveer, with Ladurlad and Kailyal, descends to the abode of Yaman, Lord of Hell, to plead for aid against Kehama.*]

XXIII.

PADALON.

WHOE'ER hath loved with venturous step to tread
The chambers dread
Of some deep cave, and seen his taper's beam
Lost in the arch of darkness overhead,
And mark'd its gleam,
Playing afar upon the sunless stream,
Where from their secret bed,
And course unknown and inaccessible,
The silent waters well ;

Whoe'er hath trod such caves of endless night,
He knows, when measuring back the gloomy way,
With what delight refresh'd his eye
Perceives the shadow of the light of day,
Through the far portal slanting, where it falls
Dimly reflected on the watery walls ;
How heavenly seems the sky ;
And how, with quicken'd feet, he hastens up,
Eager-again to greet
The living World and blessed sunshine there,
And drink, as from a cup
Of joy, with thirsty lips, the open air.

Far other light than that of day there shone
Upon the travellers, entering Padalon.
They too in darkness enter'd on their way,
But far before the Car,
A glow, as of a fiery furnace light,
Fill'd all before them. 'Twas a light which made
Darkness itself appear

A thing of comfort, and the sight, dismay'd,
Shrunk inward from the molten atmosphere.
Their way was through the adamantine rock
Which girt the World of Woe ; on either side
Its massive walls arose, and overhead
Arch'd the long passage ; onward as they ride,
With stronger glare the light around them spread ;
And lo ! the regions dread,
The World of Woe before them, opening wide.

There rolls the fiery flood,
Girding the realms of Padalon around.
A sea of flame it seem'd to be,
Sea without bound ;
For neither mortal nor immortal sight,
Could pierce across through the intensest light.
A single rib of steel,
Keen as the edge of keenest scymitar,
Spann'd this wide gulph of fire. The infernal Car
Roll'd to the Gulph, and on its single wheel
Self-balanced, rose upon that edge of steel.
Red-quiivering float the vapours overhead,
The fiery gulph beneath them spread,
Tosses its billowing blaze with rush and roar ;
Steady and swift the self-moved Chariot went,
Winning the long ascent,
Then, downward rolling, gains the farther shore.

But, oh ! what sounds and sights of woe,
What sights and sounds of fear,
Assail the mortal travellers here !
Their way was on a causey straight and wide,
Where penal vaults on either side were seen,
Ranged like the cells wherein
Those wondrous winged alchemists infold
Their stores of liquid gold.

Thick walls of adamant divide
The dungeons ; and from yonder circling flood,
Off-streams of fire through secret channels glide,
And wind among them, and in each provide
An everlasting food-
Of rightful torments for the accursed brood.

These were the rebel race, who in their might
Confiding impiously, would fain have driven
The Deities supreme from highest Heaven :
But by the Suras, in celestial fight,
Opposed and put to flight,
Here, in the penal dens, the accursed crew,
Not for its crime, but for its failure, rue
Their wild ambition. Yet again they long
The contest to renew,
And wield their arms again in happier hour ;
And with united power,
Following Kehama's triumph, to press on
From World to World, and Heaven to Heaven, and
Sphere

To Sphere, till Hemakoot shall be their own,
And Meru-Mount, and Indra's Swerga-Bowers,
And Brama's region, where the heavenly Hours
Weave the vast circle of his age-long day.
Even over Veeshnoo's empyreal seat
They trust the Rajah shall extend their sway,
And that the seven-headed Snake, whereon
The strong Preserver sets his conquering feet,
Will rise and shake him headlong from his throne,
When, in their irresistible array,
Amid the Milky Sea they force their way.
Even higher yet their frantic thoughts aspire ;
Yea, on their beds of torment as they lie,
The highest, holiest Seeva, they defy,
And tell him they shall have anon their day,

When they will storm his realm, and seize Mount
Calasay.

Such impious hopes torment
Their raging hearts, impious and impotent ;
And now, with unendurable desire
And lust of vengeance, that, like inward fire,
Doth aggravate their punishment, they rave
Upon Kehama ; him the accursed rout
Acclaim ; with furious cries and maddening shout
They call on him to save ;
Kehama ! they exclaim ;
Thundering the dreadful echo rolls about,
And Hell's whole vault repeats Kehama's name.

Over these dens of punishment, the host
Of Padalon maintain eternal guard,
Keeping upon the walls their vigilant ward.
At every angle stood
A watch-tower, the decurion Demon's post,
Where raised on high he view'd with sleepless eye
His trust, that all was well. And over these,
Such was the perfect discipline of Hell,
Captains of fifties and of hundreds held
Authority, each in his loftier tower ;
And chiefs of legions over them had power ;
And thus all Hell with towers was girt around.
Aloft the brazen turrets shone
In the red light of Padalon ;
And on the walls between,
Dark moving, the infernal Guards were seen,
Gigantic Demons, pacing to and fro :
Who ever and anon,
Spreading their crimson pennons, plunged below,
Faster to rivet down the Asuras' chains,
And with the snaky scourge and fiercer pains,

THE CURSE OF KEHAMA.

Repress their rage rebellious. Look around,
In mingled sound, the echoing lash, the clash
Of chains, the ponderous hammer's iron stroke,
With execrations, groans, and shrieks and cries
Combined, in one wild dissonance, arise ;
And through the din there broke,
Like thunder heard through all the warring winds,
The dreadful name. Kehama, still they rave,
Hasten and save !
Now, now, Deliverer ! now, Kehama, now !
Earthly Almighty, wherefore tarriest thou ?

Oh, if that name abhor'd,
Thus utter'd, could well nigh
Dismay the Powers of Hell, and daunt their Lord,
How fearfully to Kailyal's ear it came !
She, as the Car roll'd on its rapid way,
Bent down her head, and closed her eyes for dread ;
And deafening, with strong effort from within,
Her ears against the din,
Cover'd and press'd them close with both her hands.
Sure if the mortal Maiden had not fed
On heavenly food, and long been strengthened
With heavenly converse for such end vouchsafed,
Her human heart had failed, and she had died
Beneath the horrors of this awful hour.
But Heaven supplied a power
Beyond her earthly nature, to the measure
Of need infusing strength ;
And Fate, whose secret and unerring pleasure
Appointed all, decreed
An ample mede and recompense at length.
High-fated Maid, the righteous hour is nigh !
The all-embracing Eye
Of Retribution still beholdeth thee ;
Bear onward to the end, O Maid, courageously !

On roll'd the Car, and lo ! afar
Upon its height the towers of Yamenpur
Rise on the astonish'd sight,
Behold the infernal City, Yamen's seat
Of empire, in the midst of Padalon,
Where the eight causeys meet,
There on a rock of adamant it stood,
Resplendent far and wide,
Itself of solid diamond edified,
And all around it roll'd the fiery flood.
Eight bridges arch'd the stream ; huge piles of brass
Magnificent, such structures as beseeem
The Seat and Capital of such great God,
Worthy of Yamen's own august abode.
A brazen tower and gateway at each end
Of each was raised, where Giant Wardens stood,
Station'd in arms the passage to defend,
That never foe might cross the fiery flood.

Oh what a gorgeous sight it was to see
The Diamond City blazing on its height
With more than mid-sun splendour, by the light
Of its own fiery river !

Its towers and domes and pinnacles and spires,
Turrets and battlements, that flash and quiver
Through the red restless atmosphere for ever ;
And hovering over head,

The smoke and vapours of all Padalon,
Fit firmament for such a world, were spread,
With surge and swell, and everlasting motion,
Heaving and opening like tumultuous ocean.

Nor were there wanting there
Such glories as beseeem'd such region well ;
For though with our blue heaven and genial air
The firmament of Hell might not compare,

As little might our earthly tempests vie
With the dread storms of that infernal sky,
Whose clouds of all metallic elements
Sublimed were full. For, when its thunder broke,
Not all the united World's artillery,
In one discharge, could equal that loud stroke ;
And though the Diamond Towers and Battlements
Stood firm upon the adamantine rock,
Yet while it vollied round the vault of Hell,
Earth's solid arch was shaken with the shock,
And Cities in one mighty ruin fell.
Through the red sky terrific meteors scour ;
Huge stones come hailing down : or sulphur-shower,
Floating amid the lurid air like snow,
Kindles in its descent,
And with blue fire-drops rains on all below.
At times the whole supernal element
Igniting, burst in one large sheet of flame,
And roar'd as with the sound
Of rushing winds, above, below, around ;
Anon the flame was spent, and overhead
A heavy cloud of moving darkness spread.

Straight to the brazen bridge and gate
The self-moved Chariot bears its mortal load.
At sight of Carmala,
On either side the Giant guards divide,
And give the chariot way.
Up yonder winding road it rolls along,
Swift as the bittern soars on spiral wing,
And lo ! the Palace of the Infernal King !

Two forms inseparable in unity
Hath Yamen ; even as with hope or fear
The Soul regardeth him doth he appear ;
For hope and fear

At that dread hour, from ominous conscience spring,
And err not in their bodings. Therefore some,
They who polluted with offences come,
Behold him as the King
Of Terrors, black of aspect, red of eye,
Reflecting back upon the sinful mind,
Heighten'd with vengeance, and with wrath divine
Its own inborn deformity.
But to the righteous Spirit how benign
His awful countenance,
Where, tempering justice with parental love,
Goodness and heavenly grace
And sweetest mercy shine ! Yet is he still
Himself the same, one form, one face, one will ;
And these his twofold aspects are but one :
And change is none
In him, for change in Yamen could not be,
The Immutable is he.

He sat upon a marble sepulchre
Massive and huge, where, at the Monarch's feet,
The righteous Baly had his Judgment-seat.
A Golden Throne before them vacant stood ;
Three human forms sustain'd its ponderous weight,
With lifted hands outspread, and shoulders bow'd
Bending beneath the load.
A fourth was wanting. They were of the hue
Of coals of fire ; yet were they flesh and blood,
And living breath they drew ;
And their red eye-balls roll'd with ghastly stare,
As thus, for their misdeeds, they stood tormented there.

On steps of gold these living Statues stood,
Who bore the Golden Throne. A cloud behind
Immovable was spread ; not all the light
Of all the flames and fires of Padalon

THE CURSE OF KEHAMA.

Could pierce its depth of night.
There Azyoruca veil'd her awful form
In those eternal shadows : there she sate,
And as the trembling Souls, who crowd around
The Judgment-seat, received the doom of fate,
Her giant arms, extending from the cloud,
Drew them within the darkness. Moving out
To grasp and bear away the innumerable rout,
For ever and for ever thus were seen
The thousand mighty arms of that dread Queen.

Here, issuing from the car, the Glendoveer
Did homage to the God, then raised his head.
Suppliants we come, he said,
I need not tell thee by what wrongs oppress,
For nought can pass on earth to thee unknown ;
Sufferers from tyranny we seek for rest,
And Seeva bade us go to Yamen's throne ;
Here, he hath said, all wrongs shall be redrest.
Yamen replied, Even now the hour draws near,
When Fate its hidden ways will manifest.
Not for light purpose would the wisest send
His suppliants here, when we, in doubt and fear,
The awful issue of the hour attend.
Wait ye in patience and in faith the end !

XXIV.*THE AMREETA.*

So spake the King of Padalon, when, lo !
The voice of lamentation ceased in Hell,
And sudden silence all around them fell,

Silence more wild and terrible
Than all the infernal dissonance before.
Through that portentous stillness, far away,
Unwonted sounds were heard, advancing on
And deepening on their way ;
For now the inexorable hour
Was come, and, in the fulness of his power,
Now that the dreadful rites had all been done,
Kehama from the Swerga hasten'd down,
To seize upon the throne of Padalon.

He came in all his might and majesty,
With all his terrors clad, and all his pride ;
And, by the attribute of Deity,
Which he had won from Heaven, self-multiplied,
The Almighty Man appear'd on every side.
In the same indivisible point of time,
At the eight Gates he stood at once, and beat
The Warden-Gods of Hell beneath his feet ;
Then, in his brazen Cars of triumph, straight,
At the same moment, drove through every gate.
By Aullays, hugest of created kind,
Fiercest, and fleeter than the viewless wind,
His Cars were drawn, ten yokes of ten abreast, . . .
What less sufficed for such almighty weight ?
Eight bridges from the fiery flood arose
Growing before his way ; and on he goes,
And drives the thundering Chariot wheels along,
At once o'er all the roads of Padalon.

Silent and motionless remain
The Asuras on their bed of pain,
Waiting, with breathless hope, the great event.
All Hell was hush'd in dread,
Such awe that omnipresent coming spread ;

Nor had its voice been heard, though all its rout
Innumerable had lifted up one shout ;
Nor if the infernal firmament
Had in one unimaginable burst
Spent its collected thunders, had the sound,
Been audible, such louder terrors went
Before his forms substantial. Round about
The presence scattered lightnings far and wide,
That quench'd on every side,
With their intensest blaze, the feebler fire
Of Padalon, even as the stars go out,
When, with prodigious light,
Some blazing meteor fills the astonish'd night.

The Diamond City shakes !
The adamantine Rock
Is loosen'd with the shock !
From its foundation moved, it heaves and quakes ;
The brazen portals crumbling fall to dust ;
Prone fall the Giant Guards
Beneath the Aullays crush'd ;
On, on, through Yamenpur, their thundering feet
Speed from all points to Yamen's Judgment-seat.
And lo ! where multiplied,
Bend, before him, and on every side,
Wielding all weapons in his countless hands,
Around the Lord of Hell Kehama stands !
Then too the Lord of Hell put forth his might ;
Thick darkness, blacker than the blackest night,
Rose from their wrath, and veil'd
The unutterable fight.
The power of Fate and Sacrifice prevail'd,
And soon the strife was done.
Then did the Man-God re-assume
His unity, absorbing into one

The consubstantiate shapes ; and as the gloom
Opened, fallen Yamen on the ground was seen,
His neck beneath the conquering Rajah's feet,
Who on the marble tomb
Had his triumphal seat.

Silent the Man-Almighty sate ; a smile
Gleam'd on his dreadful lips, the while
Dallying with power, he paused from following up
His conquest, as a man in social hour
Sips of the grateful cup,
Again and yet again with curious taste
Searching its subtle flavour ere he drink :
Even so Kehama now forbore his haste,
Having within his reach whate'er he sought,
On his own haughty power he seem'd to muse,
Pampering his arrogant heart with silent thought.
Before him stood the Golden Throne in sight,
Right opposite ; he could not choose but see
Nor seeing choose but wonder. Who are ye
Who bear the Golden Throne tormented there ?
He cried ; for whom doth destiny prepare
The Imperial Seat, and why are ye but Three ?

FIRST STATUE.

I of the Children of Mankind was first,
Me miserable ! who, adding store to store,
Heapt up superfluous wealth ; and now accurst,
For ever I the frantic crime deplore.

SECOND STATUE.

I o'er my Brethren of Mankind the first
Usurping power, set up a throne sublime,
A King and Conqueror: therefore thus accurst,
For ever I in vain repent the crime.

THIRD STATUE.

I on the Children of Mankind the first,
In God's most holy name, imposed a tale
Of impious falsehood ; therefore thus accurst,
For ever I in vain the crime bewail.

Even as thou here beholdest us,
Here we have stood, tormented thus,
Such countless ages, that they seem to be
Long as eternity,
And still we are but Three.
A Fourth will come to share
Our pain, at yonder vacant corner bear
His portion of the burthen, and compleat .
The Golden Throne for Yamen's Judgment-seat.
Thus hath it been appointed : he must be
Equal in guilt to us, the guilty Three.
Kehama, come ! too long we wait for thee !

Thereat, with one accord,
The Three took up the word, like choral song,
Come Rajah ! Man-God ! Earth's Almighty Lord !
Kehama, come ! we wait for thee too long.

A short and sudden laugh of wondering pride
Burst from him in his triumph : to reply-
Scornful he deign'd not ; but with alter'd eye
Wherein some doubtful meaning seem'd to lie,
He turn'd to Kailyal. Maiden, thus he cried,
I need not bid thee see
How vain it is to strive with Fate's decree,
When hither thou hast fled to fly from me,
And lo ! even here thou find'st me at thy side.
Mine thou must be, being doom'd with me to share
The Amreeta-cup of immortality ;

Yea, by Myself I swear,
It hath been thus appointed. Joyfully
Join then thy hand and heart and will with mine,
Not at such glorious destiny repine,
Nor in thy folly more provoke my wrath divine.

She answer'd ; I have said. It must not be !
Almighty as thou art,
Thou hast put all things underneath thy feet ;
But still the resolute heart
And virtuous will are free.
Never, oh ! never, . . . never . . . can there be
Communion, Rajah, between thee and me.

Once more, quoth he, I urge, and once alone.
Thou seest yon Golden Throne,
Where I anon shall set thee by my side ;
Take thou thy seat thereon,
Kehama's willing bride,
And I will place the Kingdoms of the World
Beneath thy Father's feet,
Appointing him the King of mortal men :
Else underneath that Throne,
The Fourth supporter he shall stand and groan ;
Prayers will be vain to move my mercy then.

Again the Virgin answer'd, I have said !
Ladurlad caught her in his proud embrace,
While on his neck she hid
In agony her face.

Bring forth the Amreeta-cup ! Kehama cried
To Yamen, rising sternly in his pride.
It is within the Marble Sepulchre,
The vanquish'd Lord of Padalon replied,

Bid it be open'd. Give thy treasure up !
Exclaim'd the Man-Almighty to the Tomb.
And at his voice and look
The massy fabric shook, and open'd wide.
A huge Anatomy was seen reclined
Within its marble womb. Give me the Cup !
Again Kehama cried ; no other charm
Was needed than that voice of stern command.
From his repose the ghastly form arose,
Put forth his bony and gigantic arm,
And gave Amreeta to the Rajah's hand.
Take ! drink ! with accents dread the Spectre said,
For thee and Kailyal hath it been assign'd,
Ye only of the Children of Mankind.

Then was the Man-Almighty's heart elate ;
This is the consummation ! he exclaim'd ;
Thus have I triumphed over Death and Fate.
Now, Seeva ! look to thine abode !
Henceforth, on equal footing we engage,
Alike immortal now, and we shall wage
Our warfare, God to God !
Joy fill'd his impious soul,
And to his lips he raised the fatal bowl.

Thus long the Glendoveer had stood
Watching the wonders of the eventful hour,
Amazed but undismay'd ; for in his heart
Faith, overcoming fear, maintain'd its power.
Nor had the faith abated, when the God
Of Padalon was beaten down in fight ;
For then he look'd to see the heavenly might
Of Seeva break upon them. But when now
He saw the Amreeta in Kehama's hand,
An impulse which defied all self-command

In that extremity
Stung him, and he resolved to seize the cup,
And dare the Rajah's force in Seeva's sight.
Forward he sprung to tempt the unequal fray,
When lo ! the Anatomy,
With warning arm, withstood his desperate way,
And from the Golden Throne the fiery Three
Again, in one accord, renew'd their song,
Kehama, come ! we wait for thee too long.

O fool of drunken hope and frantic vice !
Madman ! to seek for power beyond thy scope
Of knowledge, and to deem
Less than Omniscience could suffice
To wield Omnipotence ! O fool, to dream
That immortality could be
The meed of evil ! . . . yea thou hast it now,
Victim of thine own wicked heart's device,
Thou hast thine object now, and now must pay the price.

He did not know the holy mystery
Of the divinest cup, that as the lips
Which touch it, even such its quality,
Good or malignant : Madman ! and he thinks
The blessed prize is won, and joyfully he drinks.

Then Seeva open'd on the Accursed One
His Eye of Anger : upon him alone
The wrath-beam fell. He shudders . . . but too late ;
The deed is done,
The dreadful liquor works the will of Fate.
Immortal he would be,
Immortal he is made ; but through his veins
Torture at once and immortality,

A stream of poison doth the Amreeta run,
And while within the burning anguish flows,
His outward body glows
Like molten ore, beneath the avenging Eye,
Doom'd thus to live and burn eternally.

The fiery Three,
Beholding him, set up a fiendish cry,
A song of jubilee ;
Come, Brother, come ! they sung ; too long
Have we expected thee,
Henceforth we bear no more
The unequal weight ; Come, Brother, we are Four !

Vain his almightiness, for mightier pain
Subdued all power ; pain ruled supreme alone ;
And yielding to the bony hand
The unemptied cup, he moved toward the Throne,
And at the vacant corner took his stand.
Behold the Golden Throne at length complete,
And Yamen silently ascends the Judgment-seat.

For two alone, of all mankind, to me
The Amreeta Cup was given,
Then said the Anatomy ;
The Man hath drunk, the Woman's turn is next.
Come, Kailyal, come, receive thy doom,
And do the Will of Heaven ! . . .
Wonder, and Fear, and Awe at once perplex
The mortal Maiden's heart, but over all
Hope rose triumphant. With a trembling hand,
Obedient to his call,
She took the fated Cup ; and, lifting up
Her eyes, where holy tears began to swell,
Is it not your command,

Ye heavenly Powers? as on her knees she fell,
The pious Virgin cried ;
Ye know my innocent will, my heart sincere,
Ye govern all things still,
And wherefore should I fear !

She said, and drank. The Eye of Mercy beam'd
Upon the Maid : a cloud of fragrance stean'd
Like incense-smoke, as all her mortal frame
Dissolved beneath the potent agency
Of that mysterious draught ; such quality,
From her pure touch, the fated Cup partook.
Like one entranced she knelt,
Feeling her body melt
Till all but what was heavenly pass'd away :
Yet still she felt
Her Spirit strong within her, the same heart,
With the same loves, and all her heavenly part
Unchanged, and ripen'd to such perfect state
In this miraculous birth, as here on Earth,
Dimly our holiest hopes anticipate.

Mine ! mine ! with rapturous joy Ereenia cried,
Immortal now, and yet not more divine ;
Mine, mine, . . . for ever mine !
The immortal Maid replied,
For ever, ever, thine !

Then Yamen said, O thou to whom by Fate,
Alone of all mankind, this lot is given,
Daughter of Earth, but now the Child of Heaven !
Go with thy heavenly Mate,
Partaker now of his immortal bliss ;
Go to the Swerga Bowers,
And there recall the hours
Of endless happiness.

But that sweet Angel, for she still retain'd
Her human loves and human piety,
As if reluctant at the God's commands,
Linger'd, with anxious eye
Upon her Father fix'd, and spread her hands
Toward him wistfully.
Go ! Yamen said, nor cast that look behind
Upon Ladurlad at this parting hour,
For thou shalt find him in thy Mother's Bower.

The Car, for Carmala his word obey'd,
Moved on, and bore away the Maid,
While from the Golden Throne the Lord of Death
With love benignant on Ladurlad smiled,
And gently on his head his blessing laid.
As sweetly as a Child,
Whom neither thought disturbs nor care encumbers,
Tired with long play, at close of summer day,
Lies down and slumbers,
Even thus as sweet a boon of sleep partaking,
By Yamen blest, Ladurlad sunk to rest.
Blessed that sleep ! more blessed was the waking !
For on that night a heavenly morning broke,
The light of heaven was round him when he woke,
And in the Swerga, in Yedillian's Bower,
All whom he loved he met, to part no more.

*RODERICK, THE LAST OF THE
GOTHS.*

WITIZA, King of the Wisi-Goths; dethroned and
blinded by Roderick.

THEODOFRED, son of King Chindasuintho, blinded by King
Witiza.

FAVILA, his brother; put to death by Witiza.
The Wife of Favila, Witiza's adulterous mistress.

*(These four persons are dead before the action of the poem
commences.)*

* * * *

RODERICK, the last King of the Wisi-Goths; son of
Theodofred.

PELAYO, the founder of the Spanish Monarchy; son
of Favila.

GAUDIOSA, his wife.

GUISLA, his sister.

FAVILA, his son.

HERMESIND, his daughter.

RUSILLA, widow of Theodofred, and mother of
Roderick.

COUNT PEDRO, .. } powerful Lords of Cantabria.
COUNT EUDON, .. }

ALPHONSO, Count Pedro's son, afterwards King.

URBAN, Archbishop of Toledo.

ROMANO, a Monk of the Caulian Schools, near Morida.

ABDALAZIZ, the Moorish Governor of Spain.

EGILONA, formerly the wife of Roderick, now of
Abdalaziz.

ABULCACEM, }
ALCAHMAN, } Moorish Chiefs.
AYUB, }
IBRAHIM, }
MAGUED, }

ORPAS, brother to Witiza, and formerly Archbishop
of Seville, now a renegade.

SISIBERT, } sons of Witiza and of Pelayo's mother.
EBBA, }

NUMACIAN, a renegade, Governor of Gegio.

COUNT JULIAN, ... a powerful Lord among the Wizi-Goths, now
a renegade.

FLORINDA, his daughter, violated by King Roderick.

* * * *

ADOSINDA, daughter of the Governor of Auria.

ODGAR, Abbot of St. Felix.

SIVERIAN, Roderick's foster-father.

FAVINIA, Count Pedro's wife.

Roderick, the Last of the Goths.

RODERICK AND ROMANO.

LONG had the crimes of Spain cried out to Heaven ;
At length the measure of offence was full.
Count Julian call'd the invaders ; not because
Inhuman priests with unoffending blood
Had stain'd their country ; not because a yoke
Of iron servitude oppress'd and gall'd
The children of the soil ; a private wrong
Roused the remorseless Baron. Mad to wreak
His vengeance for his violated child
On Roderick's head, in evil hour for Spain,
For that unhappy daughter and himself,
Desperate apostate . . . on the Moors he call'd ;
And like a cloud of locusts, whom the South
Wafts from the plains of wasted Africa,
The Musselmen upon Iberia's shore
Descend. A countless multitude they came ;
Syrian, Moor, Saracen, Greek renegade,
Persian and Copt and Tartar, in one bond
Of erring faith conjoin'd, . . . strong in the youth
And heat of zeal, . . . a dreadful brotherhood,
In whom all turbulent vices were let loose ;
While Conscience, with their impious creed accurst,
Drunk as with wine, had sanctified to them
All bloody, all abominable things.

Thou, Calpe, saw'st their coming ; ancient Rock
Renown'd, no longer now shalt thou be call'd
From Gods and Heroes of the days of yore,
Kronos, or hundred-handed Briareus,
Bacchus or Hercules ; but doom'd to bear
The name of thy new conqueror, and thenceforth
To stand his everlasting monument.
Thou saw'st the dark-blue waters flash before
Their ominous way, and whiten round their keels ;
Their swarthy myriads darkening o'er thy sands.
There on the beach the Misbelievers spread
Their banners, flaunting to the sun and breeze ;
Fair shone the sun upon their proud array,
White turbans, glittering armour, shields engrail'd
With gold, and scymitars of Syrian steel ;
And gently did the breezes, as in sport,
Curl their long flags outrolling, and display
The blazon'd scrolls of blasphemy. Too soon
The gales of Spain from that unhappy land
Wafted, as from an open charnel-house,
The taint of death ; and that bright sun, from fields
Of slaughter, when the morning dew drew up
Corruption through the infected atmosphere.

Then fell the kingdom of the Goths ; their hour
Was come, and Vengeance, long withheld, went
loose.
Famine and Pestilence had wasted them,
And Treason, like an old and eating sore,
Consumed the bones and sinews of their strength ;
And worst of enemies, their sins were arm'd
Against them. Yet the sceptre from their hands
Pass'd not away inglorious, nor was shame
Left for their children's lasting heritage ;
Eight summer days, from morn till latest eve,

The fatal fight endured, till perfidy
 Prevailing to their overthrow, they sunk
 Defeated, not dishonour'd. On the banks
 Of Chrysus, Roderick's royal car was found,
 His battle-horse Orelia, and that helm
 Whose horns, amidst the thickest of the fray
 Eminent, had mark'd his presence. Did the stream
 Receive him with the undistinguish'd dead,
 Christian and Moor, who clogg'd its course that day?
 So thought the Conqueror, and from that day forth,
 Memorial of his perfect victory,
 He bade the river bear the name of Joy.
 So thought the Goths; they said no prayer for him,
 For him no service sung, nor mourning made,
 But charged their crimes upon his head, and curs'd
 His memory.

Bravely in that eight-days' fight
 The King had striven, . . . for victory first, while
 hope
 Remain'd, then desperately in search of death.
 The arrows pass'd him by to right and left,
 The spear-point pierced him not, the scymitar
 Glanced from his helmet. Is the shield of Heaven,
 Wretch that I am, extended over me?
 Cried Roderick; and he dropt Orelia's reins,
 And threw his hands aloft in frantic prayer, . . .
 Death is the only mercy that I crave,
 Death soon and short, death and forgetfulness!
 Aloud he cried; but in his inmost heart
 There answer'd him a secret voice, that spake
 Of righteousness and judgment after death,
 And God's redeeming love, which fain would save
 The guilty soul alive. 'Twas agony,
 And yet 'twas hope; . . . a momentary light,
 That flash'd through utter darkness on the Cross
 To point salvation, then left all within

Dark as before. Fear, never felt till then,
Sudden and irresistible as stroke
Of lightning, smote him. From his horse he dropt,
Whether with human impulse, or by Heaven
Struck down, he knew not ; loosen'd from his wrist
The sword-chain, and let fall the sword, whose hilt
Clung to his palm a moment ere it fell,
Glued there with Moorish gore. His royal robe,
His horned helmet and enamell'd mail,
He cast aside, and taking from the dead
A peasant's garment, in those weeds involved
Stole like a thief in darkness from the field.

Evening closed round to favour him. All night
He fled, the sound of battle in his ear
Ringing, and sights of death before his eyes,
With forms more horrible of eager fiends
That seem'd to hover round, and gulphs of fire
Opening beneath his feet. At times the groan
Of some poor fugitive, who, bearing with him
His mortal hurt, had fallen beside the way,
Roused from these dread visions, and he call'd
In answering groans on his Redeemer's name,
That word the only prayer that pass'd his lips
Or rose within his heart. Then would he see
The Cross whereon a bleeding Saviour hung,
Who call'd on him to come and cleanse his soul
In those all-healing streams, which from his wounds,
As from perpetual springs, for ever flow'd.
No hart e'er panted for the water brooks
As Roderick thirsted there to drink and live ;
But Hell was interposed ; and worse than Hell. . . .
Yea to his eyes more dreadful than the fiends
Who flock'd like hungry ravens round his head, . . .
Florinda stood between, and warn'd him off
With her abhorrent hands, . . . that agony

Still in her face, which, when the deed was done,
 Inflicted on her ravisher the curse
 That it invoked from Heaven. . . . Oh what a night
 Of waking horrors ! Nor when morning came
 Did the realities of light and day
 Bring aught of comfort ; wheresoe'er he went
 The tidings of defeat had gone before ;
 And leaving their defenceless homes to seek
 What shelter walls and battlements might yield,
 Old men with feeble feet, and tottering babes,
 And widows with their infants in their arms,
 Hurried along. Nor royal festival,
 Nor sacred pageant, with like multitudes
 E'er fill'd the public way. All whom the sword
 Had spared were here ; bed-rid infirmity
 Alone was left behind ; the cripple plied
 His crutches, with her child of yesterday
 The mother fled, and she whose hour was come
 Fell by the road.

Less dreadful than this view
 Of outward suffering which the day disclosed,
 Had night and darkness seem'd to Roderick's heart,
 With all their dread creations. From the throng
 He turn'd aside, unable to endure
 This burden of the general woe ; nor walls,
 Nor towers, nor mountain fastnesses he sought,
 A firmer hold his spirit yearn'd to find,
 A rock of surer strength. Unknowing where,
 Straight through the wild he hasten'd on all day,
 And with unslacken'd speed was travelling still
 When evening gather'd round. Seven days from
 morn
 Till night he travell'd thus ; the forest oaks,
 The fig-grove by the fearful husbandman
 Forsaken to the spoiler, and the vines,
 Where fox and household dog together now

Fed on the vintage, gave him food ; the hand
Of Heaven was on him, and the agony
Which wrought within, supplied a strength beyond
All natural force of man.

When the eighth eve
Was come, he found himself on Ana's banks,
Fast by the Caulian Schools. It was the hour
Of vespers, but no vesper bell was heard,
Nor other sound, than of the passing stream,
Or stork, who flapping with wide wing the air,
Sought her broad nest upon the silent tower.
Brethren and pupils thence alike had fled
To save themselves within the embattled walls
Of neighbouring Merida. One aged Monk
Alone was left behind ; he would not leave
The sacred spot beloved, for having served
There from his childhood up to ripe old age
God's holy altar, it became him now,
He thought, before that altar to await
The merciless misbelievers, and lay down
His life, a willing martyr. So he staid
When all were gone, and duly fed the lamps,
And kept devotedly the altar drest,
And duly offer'd up the sacrifice.
Four days and nights he thus had pass'd alone,
In such high mood of saintly fortitude,
That hope of Heaven became a heavenly joy ;
And now at evening to the gate he went
If he might spy the Moors, . . . for it seem'd long
To tarry for his crown.

Before the Cross
Roderick had thrown himself ; his body raised,
Half kneeling, half at length he lay ; his arms
Embraced its foot, and from his lifted face
Tears streaming down bedew'd the senseless stone,
He had not wept till now, and at the gush

Of these first tears, it seem'd as if his heart,
 From a long winter's icy thrall let loose,
 Had open'd to the genial influences
 Of Heaven. In attitude, but not in act
 Of prayer he lay; an agony of tears
 Was all his soul could offer. When the Monk
 Beheld him suffering thus, he raised him up,
 And took him by the arms, and led him in,
 And there before the altar, in the name
 Of Him whose bleeding image there was hung,
 Spake comfort, and adjured him in that name
 There to lay down the burthen of his sins.
 Lo! said Romano, I am waiting here
 The coming of the Moors, that from their hands
 My spirit may receive the purple robe
 Of martyrdom, and rise to claim its crown.
 That God who willeth not the sinners's death
 Hath led thee hither. Threescore years and five,
 Even from the hour when I, a five-years' child,
 Enter'd the schools, have I continued here
 And served the altar: not in all those years
 Hath such a contrite and a broken heart
 Appear'd before me. O my brother, Heaven
 Hath sent thee for thy comfort, and for mine,
 That my last earthly act may reconcile
 A sinner to his God.

Then Roderick knelt
 Before the holy man, and strove to speak.
 Thou seest, he cried, . . . thou seest, . . . but
 memory

And suffocating thoughts repress'd the word,
 And shudderings like an ague fit, from head
 To foot convulsed him; till at length, subduing
 His nature to the effort, he exclaim'd,
 Spreading his hands and lifting up his face,
 As if resolved in penitence to bear

A human eye upon his shame. . . . Thou seest
Roderick the Goth ! That name would have sufficed
To tell its whole abhorred history :
He not the less pursued, . . . the ravisher,
The cause of all this ruin ! Having said,
In the same posture motionless he knelt,
Arms straighten'd down, and hands outspread, and
eyes
Raised to the Monk, like one who from his voice
Awaited life or death.

All night the old man
Pray'd with his penitent, and minister'd
Unto the wounded soul, till he infused
A healing hope of mercy that allay'd
Its heat of anguish. But Romano saw
What strong temptations of despair beset,
And how he needed in this second birth,
Even like a yearling child, a fosterer's care.
Father in Heaven, he cried, thy will be done !
Surely I hoped that I this day should sing
Hosannahs at thy throne ; but thou hast yet
Work for thy servant here. He girt his loins,
And from her altar took with reverent hands
Our Lady's image down : In this, quoth he,
We have our guide and guard and comforter,
The best provision for our perilous way.
Fear not but we shall find a resting-place,
The Almighty's hand is on us.

They went forth,
They cross'd the stream, and when Romano turn'd
For his last look toward the Caulian towers,
Far off the Moorish standards in the light
Of morn were glittering, where the miscreant host
Toward the Lusitanian capital
To lay their siege advanced ; the eastern breeze
Bore to the fearful travellers far away

The sound of horn and tambour o'er the plain.
 All day they hasten'd, and when evening fell
 Sped toward the setting sun, as if its line
 Of glory came from Heaven to point their course.
 But feeble were the feet of that old man
 For such a weary length of way ; and now
 Being pass'd the danger (for in Merida
 Sacaru long in resolute defence
 Withstood the tide of war,) with easier pace
 The wanderers journey'd on ; till having cross'd
 Rich Tagus, and the rapid Zezere,
 Then from the Albardos' hoary height beheld
 Pine-forest, fruitful vale, and that fair lake
 Where Alcoa, mingled there with Baza's stream,
 Rest on its passage to the western sea,
 That sea the aim and boundary of their toil.

The fourth week of their painful pilgrimage
 Was full, when they arrived where from the land
 A rocky hill, rising with steep ascent,
 O'erhung the glittering beach ; there on the top
 A little lowly hermitage they found,
 And a rude Cross, and at its foot a grave,
 Bearing no name, nor other monument.
 Where better could they rest than here, where faith
 And secret penitence and happiest death
 Had bless'd the spot, and brought good Angels down,
 And open'd as it were a way to Heaven ?
 Behind them was the desert, offering fruit
 And water for their need : on either side
 The white sand sparkling to the sun ; in front,
 Great Ocean with its everlasting voice,
 As in perpetual jubilee proclaim'd
 The wonders of the Almighty, filling thus
 The pauses of their fervent orisons.
 Where better could the wanderers rest than here ?

ADOSINDA.

[After twelve months, the monk dies, and Roderick leaves the solitudes.]

LEAVING these captive scenes behind, he crost
 Cavad's silver current, and the banks
 Of Lima, through whose groves in after years,
 Mournful yet sweet, Diogo's amorous lute
 Prolong'd its tuneful echoes. But when now
 Beyond Arnoya's tributary tide,
 He came where Minho roll'd its ampler stream
 By Auria's ancient walls, fresh horrors met
 His startled view ; for prostrate in the dust
 Those walls were laid, and towers and temples stood
 Tottering in frightful ruins, as the flame
 Had left them black and bare ; and through the
 streets,
 All with the recent wreck of war bestrewn,
 Helmet and turban, scymitar and sword,
 Christian and Moor in death promiscuous lay
 Each where they fell ; and blood-flakes, parch'd and
 crack'd
 Like the dry slime of some receding flood ;
 And half-burnt bodies, which allured from far
 The wolf and raven, and to impious food
 Tempted the houseless dog.

A thrilling pang,
 A sweat like death, a sickness of the soul,
 Came over Roderick. Soon they pass'd away,
 And admiration in their stead arose,
 Stern joy, and inextinguishable hope,
 With wrath, and hate, and sacred vengeance now
 Indissolubly link'd. O valiant race,
 O people excellently brave, he cried,

True Goths ye fell, and faithful to the last ;
 Though overpower'd, triumphant, and in death
 Unconquer'd ! Holy be your memory !
 Blessed and glorious now and evermore
 Be your heroic names ! . . . Led by the sound,
 As thus he cried aloud, a woman came
 Toward him from the ruins. For the love
 Of Christ, she said, lend me a little while
 Thy charitable help ! . . . Her words, her voice,
 Her look, more horror to his heart convey'd
 Than all the havoc round : for though she spake
 With the calm utterance of despair, in tones
 Deep-breathed and low, yet never sweeter voice
 Pour'd forth its hymns in ecstasy to Heaven.
 Her hands were bloody, and her garments stain'd
 With blood, her face with blood and dust defiled.
 Beauty and youth, and grace and majesty,
 Had every charm of form and feature given ;
 But now upon her rigid countenance
 Severest anguish set a fixedness
 Ghastlier than death.

She led him through the streets

A little way along, where four low walls,
 Heapt rudely from the ruins round, enclosed
 A narrow space : and there upon the ground
 Four bodies, decently composed, were laid,
 Though horrid all with wounds and clotted gore ;
 A venerable ancient, by his side
 A comely matron, for whose middle age,
 (If ruthless slaughter had not intervened,)
 Nature it seem'd, and gentle Time, might well
 Have many a calm declining year in store ;
 The third an arm'd warrior, on his breast
 An infant, over whom his arms were cross'd.
 There, . . with firm eye and steady countenance
 Unflinching, she address him, . . . there they lie,

Child, Husband, Parents, . . . Adosinda's all !
 I could not break the earth with these poor hands,
 Nor other tomb provide, . . but let that pass !
 Auria itself is now but one wide tomb
 For all its inhabitants :—What better grave ?
 What worthier monument ? . . . Oh cover not
 Their blood, thou Earth ! and ye, ye blessed Souls
 Of Heroes and of murder'd Innocents,
 Oh never let your everlasting cries
 Cease round the Eternal Throne, till the Most High
 For all these unexampled wrongs hath given
 Full, . . . overflowing vengeance !

While she spake

She raised her lofty hands to Heaven, as if
 Calling for justice on the Judgment-seat ;
 Then laid them on her eyes, and leaning on
 Bent o'er the open sepulchre.

But soon

With quiet mien collectedly, like one
 Who from intense devotion, and the act
 Of ardent prayer, arising, girds himself
 For this world's daily business, . . . she arose,
 And said to Roderick, Help me now to raise
 The covering of the tomb.

With half-burnt planks,

Which she had gather'd for this funeral use,
 They roof'd the vault, then, laying stones above,
 They closed it down ; last, rendering all secure,
 Stones upon stones they piled, till all appear'd
 A huge and shapeless heap. Enough, she cried ;
 And taking Roderick's hands in both her own,
 And wringing them with fervent thankfulness,
 May God show mercy to thee, she exclaim'd,
 When most thou needest mercy ! Who thou art
 I know not ; not of Auria, . . . for of all

Her sons and daughters, save the one who stands
 Before thee, not a soul is left alive.
 But thou hast render'd to me, in my hour
 Of need, the only help which man could give.
 What else of consolation may be found
 For one so utterly bereft, from Heaven
 And from myself must come. For deem not thou
 That I shall sink beneath calamity:
 This visitation, like a lightning-stroke,
 Hath scathed the fruit and blossom of my youth;
 One hour hath orphan'd me, and widow'd me,
 And made me childless. In this sepulchre
 Lie buried all my earthward hopes and fears,
 All human loves and natural charities; . .
 All womanly tenderness, all gentle thoughts,
 All female weakness too, I bury here,
 Yea, all my former nature. There remain
 Revenge and death: . . . the bitterness of death
 Is past, and Heaven already hath vouchsafed
 A foretaste of revenge.

Look here ! she cried,
 And drawing back, held forth her bloody hands, . . .
 'Tis Moorish ! . . . In the day of massacre,
 A captain of Alcahman's murderous host
 Reserved me from the slaughter. Not because
 My rank and station tempted him with thoughts
 Of ransom, for amid the general waste
 Of ruin all was lost ; . . . Nor yet, be sure,
 That pity moved him, . . they who from this race
 Accurst for pity look, such pity find
 As ravenous wolves show the defenceless flock.
 My husband at my feet had fallen ; my babe, . . .
 Spare me that thought, O God ! . . . and then . . .
 even then
 Amid the maddening throes of agony
 Which rent my soul, . . . when if this solid Earth

Had open'd and let out the central fire
Before whose all-involving flames wide Heaven
Shall shrivel like a scroll and be consumed,
The universal wreck had been to me
Relief and comfort ; . . . even then this Moor
Turn'd on me his libidinous eyes, and bade
His men reserve me safely for an hour
Of dalliance, . . . me ! . . . me in my agonies !
But when I found for what this miscreant child
Of Hell had snatch'd me from the butchery,
The very horror of that monstrous thought
Saved me from madness ; I was calm at once, . . .
Yet comforted and reconciled to life :
Hatred became to me the life of life,
Its purpose and its power.

The gluttoned Moors
At length broke up. This hell-dog turn'd aside
Toward his home ; we travell'd fast and far,
Till by a forest edge at eve he pitched
His tents. I wash'd and ate at his command,
Forcing revolted nature ; I composed
My garments and bound up my scatter'd hair ;
And when he took my hand, and to his couch
Would fain have drawn me, gently I retired
From that abominable touch, and said,
Forbear to-night I pray thee, for this day
A widow, as thou seest me, am I made ;
Therefore, according to our law, must watch
And pray to-night. The loathsome villain paused
Ere he assented, then laid down to rest ;
While at the door of the pavilion, I
Knelt on the ground, and bowed my face to earth ;
But when the neighbouring tents had ceased their
stir,
The fires were out, and all were fast asleep,
Then I arose. The blessed Moon from Heaven

Lent me her holy light. I did not pray
 For strength, for strength was given me as I drew
 The scymitar, and standing o'er his couch,
 Raised it in both my hands with steady aim
 And smote his neck. Upward, as from a spring
 When newly open'd by the husbandman,
 The villain's life-blood spouted. Twice I struck,
 So making vengeance sure ; then, praising God,
 Retired amid the wood, and measured back
 My patient way to Auria, to perform
 This duty which thou seest.

As thus she spake,

Roderick, intently listening, had forgot,
 His crown, his kingdom, his calamities
 His crimes, . . . so like a spell upon the Goth
 Her powerful words prevail'd. With open lips,
 And eager ear, and eyes which, while they watch'd
 Her features, caught the spirit that she breathed,
 Mute and enrapt he stood, and motionless ;
 The vision rose before him ; and that shout,
 Which, like a thunder-peal, victorious Spain
 Sent through the welkin, rung within his soul
 Its deep prophetic echoes. On his brow
 The pride and power of former majesty
 Dawn'd once again, but changed and purified :
 Duty and high heroic purposes
 Now hallow'd it, and as with inward light
 Illumed his meagre countenance austere.

Awhile in silence Adosinda stood,
 Reading his alter'd visage and the thoughts
 Which thus transfigured him. Ay, she exclaim'd,
 My tale hath moved thee ! it might move the dead,
 Quicken captivity's dead soul, and rouse
 This prostrate country from her mortal trance :
 Therefore I live to tell it ; and for this

Hath the Lord God Almighty given to me
 A spirit not mine own and strength from Heaven ;
 Dealing with me as in the days of old
 With that Bethulian Matron when she saved
 His people from the spoiler. What remains
 But that the life which he hath thus preserved
 I consecrate to him ? Not veil'd and vow'd
 To pass my days in holiness and peace ;
 Nor yet between sepulchral walls immured,
 Alive to penitence alone ; my rule
 He hath himself prescribed, and hath infused
 A passion in this woman's breast, wherein
 All passions and all virtues are combined ;
 Love, hatred, joy, and anguish, and despair,
 And hope, and natural piety, and faith,
 Make up the mighty feeling. Call it not
 Revenge ! thus sanctified and thus sublimed,
 'Tis duty, 'tis devotion. Like the grace
 Of God, it came and saved me ; and in it
 Spain must have her salvation. In thy hands
 Here, on the grave of all my family,
 I make my vow.

She said, and kneeling down,
 Placed within Roderick's palms her folded hands.
 This life, she cried, I dedicate to God,
 Therewith to do Him service in the way
 Which He hath shown. To rouse the land against
 This impious, this intolerable yoke, . . .
 To offer up the invader's hateful blood, . . .
 This shall be my employ, my rule and rite,
 Observances and sacrifice of faith ;
 For this I hold the life which He hath given,
 A sacred trust ; for this, when it shall suit
 His service, joyfully will lay it down.
 So deal with me as I fulfil the pledge,
 O Lord my God, my Saviour and my Judge.

Then rising from the earth, she spread her arms,
And looking round with sweeping eyes exclaim'd,
Auria, and Spain, and Heaven receive my vow !

[Roderick, having been consecrated by Odoar and Urban for the task of vengeance, goes to seek Pelayo, and to summon him to deliver his country. On his way he falls in with Siverian, his foster-father, with whom he continues his journey unrecognised.]

Hard by their path,
A little way without the walls, there stood
An edifice, whereto, as by a spell,
Siverian's heart was drawn. Brother, quoth he,
'Tis like the urgency of our return
Will brook of no retardment ; and this spot
It were a sin if I should pass, and leave
Unvisited. Beseech you turn with me,
The while I offer up one duteous prayer.

Roderick made no reply. He had not dared
To turn his face toward those walls ; but now
He follow'd where the old man led the way.
Lord ! in his heart the silent sufferer said,
Forgive my feeble soul, which would have shrunk
From this, . . . for what am I that I should put
The bitter cup aside ! O let my shame
And anguish be accepted in thy sight !

'Twas not in vain that on her absent son,
Pelayo's mother from the bed of death
Call'd for forgiveness, and in agony
Besought his prayers ; all guilty as she was,
Sure he had not been human, if that cry

Had fail'd to pierce him. When he heard the tale
He bless'd the messenger, even while his speech
Was faltering, . . . while from head to foot he
shook

With icy feelings from his inmost heart
Effused. It changed the nature of his woe,
Making the burthen more endurable :
The life-long sorrow that remain'd, became
A healing and a chastening grief, and brought
His soul, in close communion, nearer Heaven.
For he had been her first-born, and the love
Which at her breast he drew, and from her smiles,
And from her voice of tenderness imbibed,
Gave such unnatural horrors to her crimes,
That when the thought came over him, it seem'd
As if the milk which with his infant life
Had blended, thrill'd like poison through his frame.
It was a woe beyond all reach of hope,
Till with the dreadful tale of her remorse
Faith touch'd his heart ; and ever from that day
Did he for her who bore him, night and morn,
Pour out the anguish of his soul in prayer:
But chiefly as the night return'd, which heard
Her last expiring groans of penitence,
Then through the long and painful hours, before
The altar, like a penitent himself,
He kept his vigils ; and when Roderick's sword
Subdued Witiza, and the land was free,
Duly upon her grave he offer'd up
His yearly sacrifice of agony
And prayer. This was the night, and he it was
Who now before Siverian and the King
Stood up in sackcloth.

The old man, from fear
Recovering and from wonder, knew him first.
It is the Prince ! he cried, and bending down

Embraced his knees. The action and the word
 Awaken'd Roderick ; he shook off the load
 Of struggling thoughts, which pressing on his heart,
 Held him like one entranced ; yet, all untaught
 To bend before the face of man, confused
 Awhile he stood, forgetful of his part.
 But when Siverian cried, My Lord, my Lord,
 Now God be praised that I have found thee thus,
 My Lord and Prince, Spain's only hope and mine !
 Then Roderick, echoing him, exclaim'd, My Lord,
 And Prince, Pelayo ! . . . and approaching near,
 He bent his knees obeisant : but his head
 Earthward inclined ; while the old man, looking up
 From his low gesture to Pelayo's face,
 Wept at beholding him for grief and joy.

Siverian ! cried the chief, . . . of whom hath
 Death
 Bereaved me, that thou comest to Cordoba ? . . .
 Children, or wife ? . . . Or hath the merciless
 scythe
 Of this abhorr'd and jealous tyranny
 Made my house desolate at one wide sweep ?

They are as thou couldst wish, the old man replied,
 Wert thou but lord of thine own house again,
 And Spain were Spain once more. A tale of ill
 I bear, but one that touches not the heart
 Like what thy fears forebode. The renegade
 Numacian woos thy sister, and she lends
 To the vile slave, unworthily, her ear :
 The Lady Gaudiosa hath in vain
 Warn'd her of all the evils which await
 A union thus accurst : she sets at nought
 Her faith, her lineage, and thy certain wrath.

Pelayo hearing him, remain'd awhile
Silent ; then turning to his mother's grave, . . .
O thou poor dust, hath then the infectious taint
Survived thy dread remorse, that it should run
In Guisla's veins? he cried ; . . . I should have
heard

This shameful sorrow any where but here ! . . .
Humble thyself, proud heart ; thou, gracious
Heaven,

Be merciful ! . . . it is the original flaw, . . .
And what are we ? . . . a weak unhappy race,
Born to our sad inheritance of sin
And death ! . . . He smote his forehead as he
spake,

And from his head the ashes fell, like snow
Shaken from some dry beech-leaves, when a bird
Lights on the bendy spray. A little while
In silence, rather than in thought, he stood
Passive beneath the sorrow : turning then,
And what doth Gaudiosa counsel me ?
He ask'd the old man ; for she hath ever been
My wise and faithful counsellor. . . . He replied
The Lady Gaudiosa bade me say
She sees the danger which on every part
Besets her husband's house. . . . Here she had
ceased ;

But when my noble Mistress gave in charge,
How I should tell thee that in evil times
The bravest counsels ever are the best ;
Then that high-minded Lady thus rejoin'd,
Whatever be my Lord's resolve, he knows
I bear a mind prepared.

Brave spirits ! cried

Pelayo, worthy to remove all stain
Of weakness from their sex ! I should be less
Than man, if, drawing strength where others find

Their hearts most open to assault of fear,
I quail'd at danger. Never be it said
Of Spain, that in the hour of her distress
Her women were as heroes, but her men
Perform'd the woman's part.

Roderick at that

Look'd up, and taking up the word, exclaim'd,
O Prince, in better days the pride of Spain,
And prostrate as she lies, her surest hope,
Hear now my tale. The fire which seem'd extinct
Hath risen revigorate : a living spark
From Auria's ashes, by a woman's hand
Preserved and quicken'd, kindles far and wide
The beacon-flame o'er all the Asturian hills.
There hath a vow been offer'd up, which binds
Us and our children's children to the work
Of holy hatred. In the name of Spain
That vow hath been pronounced, and register'd
Above, to be the bond whereby we stand
For condemnation or acceptance. Heaven
Received the irrevocable vow, and Earth
Must witness its fulfilment, Earth and Heaven
Call upon thee, Pelayo ! Upon thee
The spirits of thy royal ancestors
Look down expectant ; unto thee, from fields
Laid waste, and hamlets burnt, and cities sack'd,
The blood of infancy and helpless age
Cries out ; thy native mountains call for thee,
Echoing from all their arm'd sons thy name.
And deem not thou that hot impatience goads
Thy countrymen to counsels immature.
Odoar and Urban from Visonia's banks
Send me, their sworn and trusted messenger,
To summon thee, and tell thee in their name
That now the hour is come : For sure it seems,
Thus said the Primate, Heaven's high will to rear

Upon the soil of Spain a Spanish throne,
Restoring in thy native line, O Prince,
The sceptre to the Spaniard. Worthy son
Of that most ancient and heroic race,
Which with unweariable endurance still
Hath striven against its mightier enemies,
Roman or Carthaginian, Greek or Goth ;
So often by superior arms oppress'd,
More often by superior arts beguiled ;
Yet amid all its sufferings, all the waste
Of sword and fire remorselessly employ'd,
Unconquer'd and unconquerable still ; . . .
Son of that injured and illustrious stock,
Stand forward thou, draw forth the sword of Spain,
Restore them to their rights, too long withheld,
And place upon thy brow the Spanish crown.

When Roderick ceased, the princely Mountaineer
Gazed on the passionate orator awhile,
With eyes intently fix'd, and thoughtful brow ;
Then turning to the altar, he let fall
The sackcloth robe, which late with folded arms
Against his heart was prest ; and stretching forth
His hands toward the crucifix, exclaim'd,
My God and my Redeemer ! where but here,
Before thy awful presence, in this garb,
With penitential ashes thus bestrewn,
Could I so fitly answer to the call
Of Spain : and for her sake, and in thy name,
Accept the Crown of Thorns she proffers me !

And where but here, said Roderick in his heart.
Could I so properly, with humbled knee
And willing soul, confirm my forfeiture ? . . .
The action follow'd on that secret thought :
He knelt, and took Pelayo's hand, and cried,

First of the Spaniards, let me with this kiss
Do homage to thee here, my Lord and King ! . . .
With voice unchanged and steady countenance
He spake ; but when Siverian follow'd him,
The old man trembled as his lips pronounced
The faltering vow ; and rising he exclaim'd,
God grant thee, O my Prince, a better fate
Than thy poor kinsman's, who in happier days
Received thy homage here ! Grief choak'd his speech,
And, bursting into tears, he sobb'd aloud.
Tears too adown Pelayo's manly cheek
Roll'd silently. Roderick alone appear'd
Unmoved and calm ; for now the royal Goth
Had offer'd his accepted sacrifice,
And therefore in his soul he felt that peace
Which follows painful duty well perform'd, . . .
Perfect and heavenly peace, . . . the peace of God.

IX.

FLORINDA.

THERE sate a woman like a suppliant,
Muffled and cloak'd, before Pelayo's gate,
Awaiting when he should return that morn.
She rose at his approach, and bow'd her head,
And, with a low and trembling utterance,
Besought him to vouchsafe her speech within
In privacy. And when they were alone,
And the doors closed, she knelt and claspt his knees,
Saying, a boon ! a boon ! This night, O Prince,
Hast thou kept vigil for thy mother's soul :
For her soul's sake, and for the soul of him
Whom once, in happier days, of all mankind
Thou heldest for thy chosen bosom friend,

Oh for the sake of his poor suffering soul,
Refuse me not !

How should I dare refuse,
Being thus adjured ? he answer'd. Thy request
Is granted, woman, . . . be it what it may
So it be lawful, and within the bounds
Of possible achievement : . . . aught unfit
Thou wouldst not with these adjurations seek.
But who thou art, I marvel, that dost touch
Upon that string, and ask in Roderick's name ! . . .
She bared her face, and, looking up, replied,
Florinda ! . . . Shrinking then, with both her hands
She hid herself, and bow'd her head abased
Upon her knee, . . . as one who, if the grave
Had oped beneath her, would have thrown herself,
Even like a lover, in the arms of Death.

Pelayo stood confused : he had not seen
Count Julian's daughter since in Roderick's court,
Glittering in beauty and in innocence,
A radiant vision, in her joy she moved ;
More like a poet's dream, or form divine,
Heaven's prototype of perfect womanhood,
So lovely was the presence, . . . than a thing
Of earth and perishable elements,
Now had he seen her in her winding-sheet,
Less painful would that spectacle have proved ;
For peace is with the dead, and piety
Bringeth a patient hope to those who mourn
O'er the departed ; but this alter'd face,
Bearing its deadly sorrow character'd,
Came to him like a ghost, which in the grave
Could find no rest. He, taking her cold hand,
Raised her, and would have spoken ; but his tongue
Fail'd in its office, and could only speak
In under tones compassionate her name.

The voice of pity soothed and melted her:
 And when the Prince bade her be comforted,
 Proffering his zealous aid in whatsoe'er
 Might please her to appoint, a feeble smile
 Pass'd slowly over her pale countenance,
 Like moonlight on a marble statue. Heaven
 Requite thee, Prince! she answer'd. All I ask
 Is but a quiet resting-place, wherein
 A broken heart, in prayer and humble hope,
 May wait for its deliverance. Even this
 My most unhappy fate denies me here.
 Griefs which are known too widely and too well
 I need not now remember. I could bear
 Privation of all Christian ordinances,
 The woe which kills hath saved me too, and made
 A temple of this ruin'd tabernacle,
 Wherein redeeming God doth not disdain
 To let his presence shine. And I could bear
 To see the turban on my father's brow; . . .
 Sorrow beyond all sorrows, . . . shame of shames, . . .
 Yet to be borne, while I with tears of blood,
 And throes of agony, in his behalf
 Implore and wrestle with offended Heaven.
 This I have borne resign'd: but other ills
 And worse assail me now; the which to bear,
 If to avoid be possible, would draw
 Damnation down. Orpas, the perjured Priest,
 The apostate Orpas, claims me for his bride.
 Obdurate as he is, the wretch profanes
 My sacred woe, and woos me to his bed,
 The thing I am, . . . the living death thou seest!

Miscreant! exclaim'd Pelayo. Might I meet
 That renegado, sword to scymitar,
 In open field, never did man approach

The altar for the sacrifice in faith
More sure, than I should hew the villain down !
But how should Julian favour his demand? . . .
Julian, who hath so passionately loved
His child, so dreadfully revenged her wrongs !

Count Julian, she replied, hath none but me,
And it hath, therefore, been his heart's desire
To see his ancient line by me preserved.
This was their covenant when in fatal hour
For Spain, and for themselves, in traitorous bond
Of union they combined. My father, stung
To madness, only thought of how to make
His vengeance sure ; the Prelate, calm and cool,
When he renounced his outward faith in Christ,
Indulged at once his hatred of the King,
His inbred wickedness, and a haughty hope,
Versed as he was in treasons, to direct
The invaders by his secret policy,
And at their head, aided by Julian's power,
Reign as a Moor upon that throne to which
The priestly order else had barr'd his way.
The African hath conquer'd for himself ;
But Orpas coveteth Count Julian's lands,
And claims to have the covenant perform'd.
Friendless, and worse than fatherless, I come
To thee for succour. Send me secretly, . . .
For well I know all faithful hearts must be
At thy devotion, . . . with a trusty guide
To guard me on the way, that I may reach
Some Christian land, where Christian rites are free,
And there discharge a vow, alas ! too long,
Too fatally delay'd. Aid me in this
For Roderick's sake, Pelayo ! and thy name
Shall be remember'd in my latest prayer.

Be comforted ! the Prince replied ; but when
 He spake of comfort, twice did he break off
 The idle words, feeling that earth had none
 For grief so irremediable as hers.
 At length he took her hand, and pressing it,
 And forcing through involuntary tears
 A mournful smile affectionate, he said,
 Say not that thou art friendless while I live !
 Thou couldst not to a readier ear have told
 Thy sorrows, nor have ask'd in fitter hour
 What for my country's honour, for my rank,
 My faith, and sacred knighthood, I am bound
 In duty to perform ; which not to do
 Would show me undeserving of the names
 Of Goth, Prince, Christian, even of Man. This day,
 Lady, prepare to take thy lot with me,
 And soon as evening closes meet me here.
 Duties bring blessings with them, and I hold
 Thy coming for a happy augury,
 In this most awful crisis of my fate.

X.

RODERICK AND FLORINDA.

WITH sword and breast-plate, under rustic weeds
 Conceal'd, at dusk Pelayo pass'd the gate,
 Florinda following near, disguised alike.
 Two peasants on their mules they seem'd, at eve
 Returning from the town. Not distant far,
 Alphonso by the appointed orange-grove,
 With anxious eye and agitated heart,
 Watched for the Prince's coming. Eagerly
 At every foot-fall through the gloom he strain'd
 His sight, nor did he recognise him when
 The Chieftain thus accompanied drew nigh ;

And when the expected signal called him on,
Doubting this female presence, half in fear
Obey'd the call. Pelayo too perceived
The boy was not alone; he not for that
Delay'd the summons, but lest need should be,
Laying hand upon his sword, toward him bent
In act soliciting speech, and low of voice
Enquired if friend or foe. Forgive me, cried
Alphonso, that I did not tell thee this,
Full as I was of happiness, before.
'Tis Hoya, servant of my father's house,
Unto whose dutiful care and love, when sent
To this vile bondage, I was given in charge.
How could I look upon my father's face
If I had in my joy deserted him,
Who was to me found faithful? . . . Right! replied
The Prince; and viewing him with silent joy,
Blessed the Mother, in his heart he said,
Who gave thee birth! but sure of womankind
Most blessed she whose hand her happy stars
Shall link with thine! and with that thought the form
Of Hermesind, his daughter, to his soul
Came in her beauty.

Soon by devious tracks
They turn'd aside. The favouring moon arose,
To guide them on their flight through upland paths
Remote from frequentage, and dales retired,
Forest and mountain glen. Before their feet
The fire-flies, swarming in the woodland shade,
Sprung up like sparks, and twinkled round their way;
The timorous blackbird, starting at their step,
Fled from the thicket with shrill note of fear;
And far below them in the peopled dell,
When all the soothing sounds of eve had ceased,
The distant watch-dog's voice at times was heard,
Answering the nearer wolf. All through the night

Among the hills they travell'd silently ;
Till when the stars were setting, at what hour
The breath of Heaven is coldest, they beheld
Within a lonely grove the expected fire,
Where Roderick and his comrade anxiously
Look'd for the appointed meeting. Halting there,
They from the burthen and the bit relieved
Their patient bearers, and around the fire
Partook of needful food and grateful rest.

Bright rose the flame replenish'd ; it illumed
The cork-tree's furrow'd rind, its rifts and swells
And redder scars, . . . and where its aged boughs
O'erbower'd the travellers, cast upon the leaves
A floating, grey, unrealising gleam.
Alphonso, light of heart, upon the heath
Lay carelessly dispread, in happy dreams
Of home ; his faithful Hoya slept beside.
Years and fatigue to old Siverian brought
Easy oblivion ; and the Prince himself,
Yielding to weary nature's gentle will,
Forgot his cares awhile. Florinda sate
Beholding Roderick with fix'd eyes intent,
Yet unregardant of the countenance
Whereon they dwelt ; in other thoughts absorb'd,
Collecting fortitude for what she yearn'd,
Yet trembled to perform. Her steady look
Disturb'd the Goth, albeit he little ween'd
What agony awaited him that hour.
Her face, well-nigh as changed as his, was now
Half hidden, and the lustre of her eye
Extinct ; nor did her voice awaken in him
One startling recollection when she spake,
So altered were its tones.

Father, she said,
All thankful as I am to leave behind

The unhappy walls of Cordoba, not less
Of consolation doth my heart receive
At sight of one to whom I may disclose
The sins that trouble me, and at his feet
Lay down repentantly, in Jesu's name,
The burthen of my spirit. In his name
Hear me, and pour into a wounded soul
The balm of pious counsel. . . . Saying thus,
She drew toward the minister ordain'd,
And kneeling by him, Father, dost thou know
The wretch who kneels beside thee? she enquired.
He answered, Surely we are each to each
Equally unknown.

Then said she, Here thou seest
One who is known too fatally for all, . . .
The daughter of Count Julian. . . . Well it was
For Roderick that no eye beheld him now;
From head to foot a sharper pang than death
Thrill'd him; his heart, as at a mortal stroke,
Ceased from its functions: his breath fail'd, and when
The power of life recovering set its springs
Again in action, cold and clammy sweat
Starting at every pore suffused his frame.
Their presence help'd him to subdue himself;
For else, had none been nigh, he would have fallen
Before Florinda prostrate on the earth,
And in that mutual agony belike
Both souls had taken flight. She mark'd him not;
For having told her name, had bow'd her head,
Breathing a short and silent prayer to Heaven,
While, as a penitent, she wrought herself
To open to his eye her hidden wounds.

Father, at length she said, all tongues amid
This general ruin shed their bitterness
On Roderick, load his memory with reproach,

And with their curses persecute his soul. . . .
 Why shouldst thou tell me this? exclaim'd the Goth,
 From his cold forehead wiping as he spake
 The death-like moisture: . . . Why of Roderick's
 guilt

Tell me? Or thinkest thou I know it not?
 Alas! who hath not heard the hideous tale
 Of Roderick's shame! Babes learn it from their nurses,
 And children, by their mothers unproved,
 Link their first execrations to his name.
 Oh, it hath caught a taint of infamy,
 That, like Iscariot's, through all time shall last,
 Reeking and fresh for ever!

There! she cried,
 Drawing her body backward where she knelt,
 And stretching forth her arms with head upraised, . . .
 There! it pursues me still! . . . I came to thee,
 Father, for com'ort and thou heapest fire
 Upon my head. But hear me patiently
 And let me undeceive thee; self-abased,
 Nor to arraign another, do I come; . . .
 I come a self-accuser, self-condemn'd,
 To take upon myself the pain deserved;
 For I have drunk the cup of bitterness,
 And having drunk therein of heavenly grace,
 I must not put away the cup of shame.

Thus as she spake she falter'd at the close,
 And in that dying fall her voice sent forth
 Somewhat of its original sweetness. Thou! . . .
 Thou self-abased! exclaim'd the astonish'd King; . . .
 Thou self-condemn'd! . . . The cup of shame for thee!
 Thee . . . thee, Florinda! . . . But the very excess
 Of passion check'd his speech, restraining thus
 From farther transport, which had haply else

Master'd him ; and he sate like one entranced,
Gazing upon that countenance so fallen,
So changed : her face, raised from its muffler now,
Was turn'd toward him, and the fire-light shone
Full on its mortal paleness ; but the shade
Conceal'd the King.

She roused him from the spell
Which held him like a statue motionless.
Thou too, quoth she, dost join the general curse,
Like one who when he sees a felon's grave,
Casting a stone there as he passes by,
Adds to the heap of shame. Oh what are we,
Frail creatures as we are, that we should sit
In judgment man on man ! and what were we,
If the All-merciful should mete to us
With the same rigorous measure wherewithal
Sinner to sinner metes ! But God beholds
The secrets of the heart, . . . therefore his name
Is Merciful. Servant of God, see thou
The hidden things of mine, and judge thou then
In charity thy brother who hath fallen. . . .
Nay, hear me to the end ! I loved the King, . . .
Tenderly, passionately, madly loved him.
Sinful it was to love a child of earth
With such entire devotion as I loved
Roderick, the heroic Prince, the glorious Goth !
And yet methought this was its only crime,
The imaginative passion seem'd so pure :
Quiet and calm like duty, hope nor fear
Disturbed the deep contentment of that love ;
He was the sunshine of my soul, and like
A flower, I lived and flourish'd in his light.
Oh bear not with me thus impatiently !
No tale of weakness this, that in the act
Of penitence, indulgent to itself,
With garrulous palliation half repeats

The sin it ill repents. I will be brief,
 And shrink not from confessing how the love
 Which thus began in innocence, betray'd
 My unsuspecting heart ; nor me alone,
 But him, before whom, shining as he shone
 With whatsoe'er is noble, whatsoe'er
 Is lovely, whatsoever good and great,
 I was as dust and ashes, . . . him, alas !
 This glorious being, this exalted Prince,
 Even him, with all his royalty of soul,
 Did this ill-omen'd, this accurs'd love,
 To his most lamentable fall betray
 And utter ruin. Thus it was : The King,
 By counsels of cold statesmen ill-advised,
 To an unworthy mate had bound himself
 In politic wedlock. Wherefore should I tell
 How Nature upon Egilona's form,
 Profuse of beauty, lavishing her gifts,
 Left, like a statue from the graver's hands,
 Deformity and hollowness beneath
 The rich external ? For the love of pomp
 And emptiest vanity, hath she not incurr'd
 The grief and wonder of good men, the gibes
 Of vulgar ribaldry, the reproach of all ;
 Profaning the most holy sacrament
 Of marriage, to become chief of the wives
 Of Abdalaziz, of the Infidel,
 The Moor, the tyrant-enemy of Spain !
 All know her now ; but they alone who knew
 What Roderick was can judge his wretchedness,
 To that light spirit and unfeeling heart
 In hopeless bondage bound. No children rose
 From this unhappy union, towards whom
 The springs of love within his soul confined
 Might flow in joy and fulness ; nor was he
 One, like Witiza, of the vulgar crew,

Who in promiscuous appetite can find
All their vile nature seeks. Alas for man !
Exuberant health diseases him, frail worm !
And the slight bias of untoward chance
Makes his best virtue from the even line,
With fatal declination, swerve aside.
Ay, thou mayest groan for poor mortality, . . .
Well, Father, mayest thou groan !

My evil fate

Made me an inmate of the royal house,
And Roderick found in me, if not a heart
Like his, . . . for who was like the heroic Goth ? . . .
One which at least felt his surpassing worth,
And loved him for himself. . . . A little yet
Bear with me, reverend Father, for I touch
Upon the point, and this long prologue goes,
As justice bids, to palliate his offence,
Not mine. The passion, which I fondly thought
Such as fond sisters for a brother feel,
Grew day by day, and strengthen'd in its growth,
Till the beloved presence had become
Needful as food or necessary sleep,
My hope, light, sunshine, life, and every thing.
Thus lapt in dreams of bliss, I might have lived
Contented with this pure idolatry,
Had he been happy : but I saw and knew
The inward discontent and household griefs
Which he subdued in silence ; and alas !
Pity with admiration mingling then,
Alloy'd and lower'd and humanised my love,
Till to the level of my lowliness
It brought him down ; and in this treacherous heart
Too often the repining thought arose,
That if Florinda had been Roderick's Queen,
Then might domestic peace and happiness
Have bless'd his home and crown'd our wedded loves.

Too often did that sinful thought recur,
Too feebly the temptation was repell'd.

See, Father, I have probed my inmost soul ;
Have search'd to its remotest source the sin ;
And tracing it through all its specious forms
Of fair disguise, I present it now,
Even as it lies before the eye of God,
Bare and exposed, convicted and condemn'd.
One eve, as in the bowers which overhang
The glen where Tagus rolls between his rocks
I roam'd alone, alone I met the King.
His countenance was troubled, and his speech
Like that of one whose tongue to light discourse
At fits constrain'd, betrays a heart disturb'd :
I too, albeit unconscious of his thoughts,
With anxious looks reveal'd what wandering words
In vain essay'd to hide. A little while
Did this oppressive intercourse endure,
Till our eyes met in silence, each to each
Telling their mutual tale, then consciously
Together fell abash'd. He took my hand
And said, Florinda, would that thou and I
Earlier had met ! oh what a blissful lot
Had then been mine, who might have found in thee
The sweet companion and the friend endear'd,
A fruitful wife and crown of earthly joys !
Thou too shouldst then have been of womankind
Happiest, as now the loveliest . . . And with that,
First giving way to passion first disclosed,
He press'd upon my lips a guilty kiss, . . .
Alas ! more guiltily received than given.
Passive and yielding, and yet self-reproach'd,
Trembling I stood, upheld in his embrace ;
When coming steps were heard, and Roderick said,
Meet me to-morrow, I beseech thee, here,

Queen of my heart ! Oh meet me here again,
My own Florinda, meet me here again ! . . .
Tongue, eye, and pressure of the impassion'd hand
Solicited and urged the ardent suit,
And from my hesitating hurried lips
The word of promise fatally was drawn.
O Roderick, Roderick ! hadst thou told me all
Thy purpose at that hour, from what a world
Of woe had thou and I . . . The bitterness
Of that reflection overcame her then,
And choak'd her speech. But Roderick sate the while
Covering his face with both his hands close-prest,
His head bow'd down, his spirit to such point
Of sufferance knit, as one who patiently
Awaits the uplifted sword.

Till now, said she,
Resuming her confession, I had lived,
If not in innocence, yet self-deceived,
And of my perilous and sinful state
Unconscious. But this fatal hour reveal'd
To my awakening soul her guilt and shame ;
And in those agonies with which remorse,
Wrestling with weakness and with cherish'd sin,
Doth triumph o'er the lacerated heart,
That night . . . that miserable night . . . I vow'd,
A virgin dedicate, to pass my life
Immured ; and, like redeemed Magdalen,
Or that Egyptian penitent, whose tears
Fretted the rock, and moisten'd round her cave
The thirsty desert, so to mourn my fall.
The struggle ending thus, the victory
Thus, as I thought, accomplish'd, I believed
My soul was calm, and that the peace of Heaven
Descended to accept and bless my vow :
And in this faith, prepared to consummate
The sacrifice, I went to meet the King.

See, Father, what a snare had Satan laid !
For Roderick came to tell me that the Church
From his unfruitful bed would set him free,
And I should be his Queen.

Oh let me close

The dreadful tale ! I told him of my vow ;
And from sincere and scrupulous piety,
But more, I fear me, in that desperate mood
Of obstinate will perverse, the which, with pride
And shame and self-reproach, doth sometimes make
A woman's tongue, her own worst enemy,
Run counter to her dearest heart's desire, . . .
In that unhappy mood did I resist
All his most earnest prayers to let the power
Of holy Church, never more rightfully
Invoked, he said, than now in our behalf,
Release us from our fatal bonds. He urged
With kindling warmth his suit, like one whose life
Hung on the issue ; I dissembled not
My cruel self-reproaches, nor my grief,
Yet desperately maintain'd the rash resolve ;
Till in the passionate argument he grew
Incensed, inflamed, and madden'd or possess'd, . . .
For Hell too surely at that hour prevail'd,
And with such subtile toils enveloped him,
That even in the extremity of guilt
No guilt he purported, but rather meant
An amplest recompence of life-long love
For transitory wrong, which fate perverse,
Thus madly he deceived himself, compell'd,
And therefore stern necessity excused.
Hear then, O Father, at thy feet I own
Myself the guiltier ; for full well I knew
These were his thoughts, but vengeance master'd me,
And in my agony I cursed the man
Whom I loved best.

Dost thou recall that curse ?

Cried Roderick, in a deep and inward voice,
Still with his head depress'd, and covering still
His countenance. Recall it ! she exclaim'd ;
Father, I come to thee because I gave
The reins to wrath too long, . . . because I wrought
His ruin, death, and infamy . . . O God,
Forgive the wicked vengeance thus indulged,
As I forgive the King ! . . . But teach me now
What reparation more than tears and prayers
May now be made ; . . . how shall I vindicate
His injured name, and take upon myself. . . .
Daughter of Julian, firmly he replied,
Speak not of that, I charge thee ! On his fame
The Ethiop dye, fixed ineffaceably,
For ever will abide ; so it must be,
So should be : 'tis his rightful punishment ;
And if to the full measure of his sin
The punishment hath fallen, the more our hope
That through the blood of Jesus he may find
That sin forgiven him.

Pausing then, he raised
His hand, and pointed where Siverian lay
Stretch'd on the heath. To that old man, said he,
And to the mother of the unhappy Goth,
Tell, if it please thee, . . . not what thou hast pour'd
Into my secret ear, but that the child
For whom they mourn with anguish unallay'd,
Sinn'd not from vicious will, or heart corrupt,
But fell by fatal circumstances betray'd.
And if in charity to them thou sayest
Something to palliate, something to excuse
An act of sudden frenzy when the Fiend
O'ercame him, thou wilt do for Roderick
All he could ask thee, all that can be done
On earth, and all his spirit could endure.

Venturing towards her an imploring look,
 Wilt thou join with me for his soul in prayer?
 He said, and trembled as he spake. That voice
 Of sympathy was like Heaven's influence,
 Wounding at once and comforting the soul.
 O Father, Christ requite thee! she exclaim'd;
 Thou hast set free the springs which withering griefs
 Have closed too long. Forgive me, for I thought
 Thou wert a rigid and unpitying judge;
 One whose stern virtue, feeling in itself
 No flaw of frailty, heard impatiently
 Of weakness and of guilt. I wrong'd thee, Father! . . .
 With that she took his hand, and kissing it,
 Bathed it with tears. Then in a firmer speech,
 For Roderick, for Count Julian, and myself,
 Three wretchedest of all the human race,
 Who have destroyed each other and ourselves,
 Mutually wrong'd and wronging, let us pray!

XV.

RODERICK AT CANGAS.

How calmly gliding through the dark-blue sky
 The midnight Moon ascends! Her placid beams
 Through thinly-scatter'd leaves and boughs grotesque,
 Mottle with mazy shades the orchard slope;
 Here, o'er the chestnut's fretted foliage grey
 And massy, motionless they spread; here shine
 Upon the crags, deepening with blacker night
 Their chasms; and there the glittering argentry
 Ripples and glances on the confluent streams.
 A lovelier, purer light than that of day
 Rests on the hills; and oh how awesfully
 Into that deep and tranquil firmament

The summits of Auseva rise serene !
 The watchman on the battlements partakes
 The stillness of the solemn hour ; he feels
 The silence of the earth, the endless sound
 Of flowing water soothes him, and the stars,
 Which in that brightest moon-light well-nigh quench'd
 Scarce visible, as in the utmost depth
 Of yonder sapphire infinite, are seen,
 Draw on with elevating influence
 Toward eternity the attemper'd mind.
 Musing on worlds beyond the grave he stands,
 And to the Virgin Mother silently
 Prefers her hymn of praise.

The mountaineers .

Before the castle, round their mouldering fires,
 Lie on the earth outstretched. Pelayo's hall
 Is full, and he upon his careful couch
 Hears all around the deep and long-drawn breath
 Of sleep ; for gentle night hath brought to these
 Perfect and undisturb'd repose, alike
 Of corporal powers and inward faculty.
 Wakeful the while he lay, yet more by hope
 Than grief or anxious thoughts possessed, . . . though
 grief

For Guisla's guilt, which freshen'd in his heart
 The memory of their wretched mother's crime,
 Still made its presence felt, like the dull sense
 Of some perpetual inward malady ;
 And the whole peril of the future lay
 Before him clearly seen. He had heard all ;
 How that unworthy sister, obstinate
 In wrong and shameless, rather seem'd to woo
 The upstart renegado than to wait
 His wooing ; how, as guilt to guilt led on,
 Spurning at gentle admonition first,
 When Gaudiosa hopelessly forebore

From farther counsel, then in sullen mood
 Resentful, Guisla soon began to hate
 The virtuous presence before which she felt
 Her nature how inferior, and her fault
 How foul. Despiteful thus she grew, because
 Humbled yet unrepentant. Who could say
 To what excess bad passions might impel
 A woman thus possessed? She could not fail
 To mark Siverian's absence, for what end
 Her conscience but too surely had divined;
 And Gaudiosa, well aware that all
 To the vile paramour was thus made known,
 Had to safe hiding-place with timely fear
 Removed her children. Well the event had proved
 How needful was that caution; for at night
 She sought the mountain solitudes, and morn
 Beheld Numacian's soldiers at the gate.
 Yet did not sorrow in Pelayo's heart
 For this domestic shame prevail that hour,
 Nor gathering danger weigh his spirit down.
 The anticipated meeting put to flight
 These painful thoughts; to-morrow will restore
 All whom his heart holds dear; his wife beloved,
 No longer now remember'd for regret,
 Is present to his soul with hope and joy;
 His inward eye beholds Favila's form
 In opening youth robust, and Hermesind,
 His daughter, lovely as a budding rose;
 Their images beguile the hours of night,
 Till with the earliest morning he may seek
 Their secret hold.

The nightingale not yet
 Had ceased her song, nor had the early lark
 Her dewy nest forsaken, when the Prince
 Upward beside Pionia took his way
 Toward Auseva. Heavily to him,

Impatient for the morrow's happiness,
Long night had linger'd, but it seem'd more long
To Roderick's aching heart. He too had watch'd
For dawn, and seen the earliest break of day,
And heard its earliest sounds ; and when the Prince
Went forth, the melancholy man was seen
With pensive pace upon Pionia's side
Wandering alone and slow. For he had left
The wearying place of his unrest, that morn
With its cold dews might bathe his throbbing brow,
And with its breath allay the feverish heat
That burnt within. Alas ! the gales of morn
Reach not the fever of a wounded heart !
How shall he meet his Mother's eye, how make
His secret known, and from that voice revered
Obtain forgiveness, . . . all that he has now
To ask, ere on the lap of earth in peace
He lay his head resign'd ? In silent prayer
He supplicated Heaven to strengthen him
Against that trying hour, there seeking aid
Where all who seek shall find ; and thus his soul
Received support, and gather'd fortitude,
Never than now more needful, for the hour
Was nigh. He saw Siverian drawing near,
And with a dim but quick foreboding met
The good old man ; yet when he heard him say,
My Lady sends to seek thee, like a knell
To one expecting and prepared for death,
But fearing the dread point that hastens on,
It smote his heart. He follow'd silently,
And knit his suffering spirit to the proof.

He went resolved to tell his Mother all,
Fall at her feet, and drinking the last drags
Of bitterness, receive the only good

Earth had in store for him. Resolved for this
 He went ; yet was it a relief to find
 That painful resolution must await
 A fitter season, when no eye but Heaven's
 Might witness to their mutual agony.
 Count Julian's daughter with Rusilla sate ;
 Both had been weeping, both were pale, but calm.
 With head as for humility abased
 Roderick approach'd, and bending, on his breast
 He cross'd his humble arms. Rusilla rose
 In reverence to the priestly character,
 And with a mournful eye regarding him,
 Thus she began. Good Father, I have heard
 From my old faithful servant and true friend,
 Thou didst reprove the inconsiderate tongue,
 That in the anguish of its spirit pour'd
 A curse upon my poor unhappy child.
 O Father Maccabee, this is a hard world,
 And hasty in its judgements ! Time has been,
 When not a tongue within the Pyrenees
 Dared whisper in dispraise of Roderick's name,
 Lest, if the conscious air had caught the sound,
 The vengeance of the honest multitude
 Should fall upon the traitorous head, or brand
 For life-long infamy the lying lips.
 Now if a voice be raised in his behalf,
 'Tis noted for a wonder, and the man
 Who utters the strange speech shall be admired
 For such excess of Christian charity.
 Thy Christian charity hath not been lost ; . . .
 Father, I feel its virtue : . . . it hath been
 Balm to my heart ; . . . with words and grateful
 tears, . . .
 All that is left me now for gratitude, . . .
 I thank thee, and beseech thee in thy prayers
 That thou wilt still remember Roderick's name.

Roderick so long had to this hour look'd on,
That when the actual point of trial came,
Torpida and numb'd it found him ; cold he grew,
And as the vital spirits to the heart
Retreated, o'er his wither'd countenance,
Deathly and damp, a whiter paleness spread.
Unmoved the while, the inward feeling seem'd,
Even in such dull insensibility
As gradual age brings on, or slow disease,
Beneath whose progress lingering life survives
The power of suffering. Wondering at himself,
Yet gathering confidence, he raised his eyes,
Then slowly shaking as he bent his head,
O venerable Lady, he replied,
If aught may comfort that unhappy soul,
It must be thy compassion, and thy prayers.
She whom he most had wrong'd, she who alone
On earth can grant forgiveness for his crime,
She hath forgiven him ; and thy blessing now
Were all that he could ask, . . . all that could bring
Profit or consolation to his soul,
If he hath been, as sure we may believe,
A penitent sincere.

Oh had he lived,
Replied Rusilla, never penitence
Had equall'd his ! full well I know his heart,
Vehement in all things. He would on himself
Have wreak'd such penance as had reach'd the height
Of fleshly suffering . . . yea, which being told
With its portentous rigour should have made
The memory of his fault, o'erpower'd and lost
In shuddering pity and astonishment,
Fade like a feebler horror. Otherwise
Seem'd good to Heaven. I murmur not, nor doubt
The boundless mercy of redeeming love.
For sure I trust that not in his offence

Harden'd and reprobate was my lost son,
 A child of wrath, cut off ! . . . that dreadful thought,
 Not even amid the first fresh wretchedness,
 When the ruin burst around me like a flood,
 Assail'd my soul. I ever deem'd his fall
 An act of sudden madness ; and this day
 Hath in unlook'd-for confirmation given
 A livelier hope, a more assur'd faith.
 Smiling benignant then amid her tears,
 She took Florinda by the hand, and said,
 I little thought that I should live to bless
 Count Julian's daughter ! She hath brought to me
 The last, the best, the only comfort earth
 Could minister to this afflicted heart,
 And my grey hairs may now unto the grave
 Go down in peace.

Happy, Florinda cried,
 Are they for whom the grave hath peace in store !
 The wrongs they have sustain'd, the woes they bear,
 Pass not that holy threshold, where Death heals
 The broken heart. O Lady, thou may'st trust
 In humble hope, through Him who on the Cross
 Gave his atoning blood for lost mankind,
 To meet beyond the grave thy child forgiven.
 I too with Roderick there may interchange
 Forgiveness. But the grief which wastes away
 This mortal frame, hastening the happy hour
 Of my enlargement, is but a light part
 Of what my soul endures ! . . . that grief hath lost
 Its sting : . . . I have a keener sorrow here, . . .
 One which, . . . but God forefend that dire event, . . .
 May pass with me the portals of the grave,
 And with a thought, like sin which cannot die,
 Embitter Heaven. My father hath renounced
 His hope in Christ ! It was his love for me
 Which drove him to perdition. . . I was born

To ruin all who loved me, . . . all I loved !
Perhaps I sinn'd in leaving him ; . . . that fear
Rises within me to disturb the peace
Which I should else have found.

To Roderick then
The pious mourner turn'd her suppliant eyes :
O Father, there is virtue in thy prayers ! . . .
I do beseech thee offer them to Heaven
In his behalf ! For Roderick's sake, for mine,
Wrestle with Him whose name is Merciful,
That Julian may with penitence be touch'd,
And clinging to the Cross, implore that grace
Which ne'er was sought in vain. For Roderick's sake
And mine, pray for him ! We have been the cause
Of his offence ! What other miseries
May from that same unhappy source have risen,
Are earthly, temporal, reparable all ; . . .
But if a soul be lost through our misdeeds,
That were eternal evil ! Pray for him,
Good Father Maccabee, and be thy prayers
More fervent, as the deeper is the crime.

While thus Florinda spake, the dog who lay
Before Rusilla's feet, eyeing him long
And wistfully, had recognised at length,
Changed as he was and in those sordid weeds,
His royal master. And he rose and lick'd
His wither'd hand, and earnestly look'd up
With eyes whose human meaning did not need
The aid of speech ; and moan'd, as if at once
To court and chide the long-withheld caress.
A feeling uncommix'd with sense of guilt
Or shame, yet painfulest, thrill'd through the King ;
But he to self-controul now long inured,
Repress his rising heart, nor other tears,

Full as his struggling bosom was, let fall
Than seem'd to follow on Florinda's words.
Looking toward her then, yet so that still
He shunn'd the meeting of her eye, he said,
Virtuous and pious as thou art, and ripe
For Heaven, O Lady, I must think the man
Hath not by his good Angel been cast off
For whom thy supplications rise. The Lord
Whose justice doth in its unerring course
Visit the children for the sire's offence,
Shall he not in his boundless mercy hear
The daughter's prayer, and for her sake restore
The guilty parent? My soul shall with thine
In earnest and continual duty join . . .
How deeply, how devoutly, He will know
To whom the cry is raised.

Thus having said,
Deliberately, in self-possession still,
Himself from that most painful interview
Dispeeding, he withdrew. The watchful dog
Follow'd his footsteps close. But he retired
Into the thickest grove; there yielding way
To his o'erburthen'd nature, from all eyes
Apart, he cast himself upon the ground,
And threw his arms around the dog, and cried,
While tears stream'd down, thou, Theron, then hast
known
Thy poor lost master, . . . Theron, none but thou!

XIX.

RODERICK AND RUSILLA.

WHEN all had been perform'd, the royal Goth
Look'd up towards the chamber in the tower
Where gazing on the multitude below,
Alone Rusilla stood. He met her eye,
For it was singling him amid the crowd ;
Obeying then the hand which beckon'd him,
He went with heart prepared, nor shrinking now,
But arm'd with self-approving thoughts that hour.
Entering in tremulous haste, he closed the door,
And turn'd to clasp her knees ; but lo, she spread
Her arms, and catching him in close embrace,
Fell on his neck, and cried, My Son, my Son ! . . .
Ere long, controlling that first agony
With effort of strong will, backward she bent
And gazing on his head now shorn and grey,
And on his furrow'd countenance, exclaim'd,
Still, still, my Roderick ! the same noble mind !
The same heroic heart ! Still, still, my Son ; . . .
Changed, . . . yet not wholly fallen, . . . not wholly
lost,
He cried, . . . not wholly in the sight of Heaven
Unworthy, O my Mother, nor in thine !
She lock'd her arms again around his neck,
Saying, Lord, let me now depart in peace !
And bow'd her head again, and silently
Gave way to tears.

When that first force was spent,
And passion in exhaustment found relief, . . .
I knew thee, said Rusilla, when the dog
Rose from my feet, and lick'd his master's hand.
All flashed upon me then ; the instinctive sense

That goes unerringly where reason fails, . . .
 The voice, the eye, . . . a mother's thoughts are
 quick, . . .
 Miraculous as it seem'd, . . . Siverian's tale, . . .
 Florinda's, . . . every action, . . . every word, . . .
 Each strengthening each, and all confirming all,
 Reveal'd thee, O my Son ! but I restrain'd
 My heart, and yielded to thy holier will
 The thoughts which rose to tempt a soul not yet
 Wean'd wholly from the world.

What thoughts ? replied

Roderick. That I might see thee yet again
 Such as thou wert, she answer'd ; not alone
 To Heaven and me restored, but to thyself, . . .
 Thy Crown, . . . thy Country, . . . all within thy
 reach ;

Heaven so disposing all things, that the means
 Which wrought the ill, might work the remedy.
 Methought I saw thee once again the hope, . . .
 The strength, . . . the pride of Spain ! The miracle
 Which I beheld made all things possible.
 I know the inconstant people, how their mind,
 With every breath of good or ill report,
 Fluctuates, like summer corn before the breeze ;
 Quick in their hatred, quicker in their love,
 Generous and hasty, soon would they redress
 All wrongs of former obloquy . . . I thought
 Of happiness restored, . . . the broken heart
 Heal'd, . . . the Count Julian, for his daughter's sake,
 Turning in thy behalf against the Moors
 His powerful sword : . . . all possibilities
 That could be found or fancied, built a dream
 Before me ; such as easiest might illude
 A lofty spirit train'd in palaces,
 And not alone amid the flatteries

Of youth with thoughts of high ambition fed
When all is sunshine, but through years of woe,
When sorrow sanctified their use, upheld
By honourable pride and earthly hopes.
I thought I yet might nurse upon my knee
Some young Theodofred, and see in him
Thy Father's image and thine own renew'd,
And love to think the little hand which there
Play'd with the bauble, should in after days
Wield the transmitted sceptre ; . . . that through him
The ancient seed should be perpetuate, . . .
That precious seed revered so long, desired
So dearly, and so wondrously preserved.

Nay, he replied, Heaven hath not with its bolts
Scathed the proud summit of the tree, and left
The trunk unflaw'd ; ne'er shall it clothe its boughs
Again, nor push again its scyons forth,
Head, root, and branch, all mortified alike ! . . .
Long ere these locks were shorn had I cut off
The thoughts of royalty ! Time might renew
Their growth, as for Manoah's captive son,
And I too on the miscreant race, like him,
Might prove my strength regenerate ; but the hour,
When in its second best nativity,
My soul was born again through grace, this heart
Died to the world. Dreams such as thine pass now
Like evening clouds before me ; if I think
How beautiful they seem, 'tis but to feel
How soon they fade, how fast the night shuts in.
But in that World to which my hopes look on,
Time enters not, nor Mutability ;
Beauty and goodness are unfading there ;
Whatever there is given us to enjoy,
That we enjoy for ever, still the same. . . .

Much might Count Julian's sword achieve for Spain
And me, but more will his dear daughter's soul
Effect in Heaven ; and soon will she be there
An Angel at the throne of Grace, to plead
In his behalf and mine.

I knew thy heart,
She answer'd, and subdued the vain desire.
It was the World's last effort. Thou hast chosen
The better part. Yes, Roderick, even on earth
There is a praise above the monarch's fame,
A higher, holier, more enduring praise,
And this will yet be thine !

O tempt me not,
Mother ! he cried ; nor let ambition take
That specious form to cheat us ! What but this,
Fallen as I am, have I to offer Heaven ?
The ancestral sceptre, public fame, content
Of private life, the general good report,
Power, reputation, happiness, . . . whate'er
The heart of man desires to constitute
His earthly weal, . . . unerring Justice claim'd
In forfeiture. I with submitted soul
Bow to the righteous law and kiss the rod.
Only while thus submitted, suffering thus, . . .
Only while offering up that name on earth,
Perhaps in trial offer'd to my choice,
Could I present myself before thy sight ;
Thus only could endure myself, or fix
My thoughts upon that fearful pass, where Death
Stands in the Gate of Heaven ! . . Time passes on,
The healing work of sorrow is complete ;
All vain desires have long been weeded out,
All vain regrets subdued ; the heart is dead,
The soul is ripe and eager for her birth.
Bless me, my Mother ! and come when it will
The inevitable hour, we die in peace.

So saying, on her knees he bow'd his head ;
She raised her hands to Heaven and blest her child ;
Then bending forward, as he rose, embraced
And claspt him to her heart, and cried, Once more
Theodosfred, with pride behold thy son !

XXIII.

THE VALE OF COVADONGA.

THE camp is stirring, and ere day hath dawn'd
The tents are struck. Early they rise whom hope
Awakens, and they travel fast with whom
She goes companion of the way. By noon
Hath Abulcacem in his speed attain'd
The vale of Cangas. Well the trusty scouts
Observe his march, and fleet as mountain roes,
From post to post with instantaneous speed
The warning bear : none else is nigh ; the vale
Hath been deserted, and Pelayo's hall
Is open to the foe, who on the tower
Hoist their white signal-flag. In Sella's stream
The misbelieving multitudes perform
With hot and hasty hand, their noon-tide rite,
Then hurryingly repeat the Impostor's prayer.
Here they divide ; the Chieftain halts with half
The host, retaining Julian and his men,
Whom where the valley widen'd he disposed,
Liable to first attack, that so the deed
Of murder plann'd with Orpas might be done.
The other force the Moor Alcahman led,

Whom Guisla guided up Pionia's stream
Eastward to Soto. Ibrahim went with him,
Proud of Granada's snowy heights subdued,
And boasting of his skill in mountain war ;
Yet sure he deem'd an easier victory
Awaited him this day. Little, quoth he,
Weens the vain Mountaineer who puts his trust
In dens and rocky fastnesses, how close
Destruction is at hand ! Belike he thinks
The Humma's happy wings have shadow'd him,
And therefore Fate with royalty must crown
His chosen head ! Pity the scymitar
With its rude edge so soon should interrupt
The pleasant dream !

There can be no escape
For those who in the cave seek shelter, cried
Alcahman ; yield they must, or from their holes
Like bees we smoke them out. The Chief perhaps
May reign awhile King of the wolves and bears
Till his own subjects hunt him down, or kites
And crows divide what hunger may have left
Upon his ghastly limbs. Happier for him
That destiny should this day to our hands
Deliver him ; short would be his sufferings then ;
And we right joyfully should in one hour
Behold our work accomplish'd, and his race
Extinct.

Thus these in mockery and in thoughts
Of bloody triumph, to the future blind,
Indulged the scornful vein ; nor deem'd that they
Whom to the sword's unsparing edge they doom'd,
Even then in joyful expectation pray'd
To Heaven for their approach, and at their post
Prepared, were trembling with excess of hope.
Here in these mountain straits the Mountaineer
Had felt his country's strength insuperable ;

Here he had pray'd to see the Musselman
With all his myriads ; therefore had he look'd
To Covadonga as a sanctuary
Apt for concealment, easy of defence ;
And Guisla's flight, though to his heart it sent
A pang more poignant for their mothers' sake,
Yet did it further in its consequence
His hope and project, surer than decoy
Well-laid, or best-concerted stratagem.
That sullen and revengeful mind, he knew,
Would follow to the extremity of guilt
Its long fore-purposed shame : the toils were laid,
And she who by the Musselmen full sure
Thought on her kindred her revenge to wreak,
Led the Moors in.

Count Pedro and his son
Were hovering with the main Asturian force
In the wider vale to watch occasion there,
And with hot onset when the alarm began
Pursue the vantage. In the fatal straits
Of Deva had the King disposed the rest :
Amid the hanging woods, and on the cliffs,
A long mile's length on either side its bed,
They lay. The lever and the axe and saw
Had skilfully been plied ; and trees and stones,
A dread artillery, ranged on crag and shelf
And steep descent, were ready at the word
Precipitate to roll resistless down.
The faithful maiden not more wistfully
Looks for the day that brings her lover home ; . . .
Scarce more impatiently the horse endures
The rein, when loud and shrill the hunter's horn
Rings in his joyous ears, than at their post
The Mountaineers await their certain prey ;
Yet mindful of their Prince's order, oft
And solemnly enforced, with eagerness

Subdued by minds well-master'd, they expect
The appointed signal.

Hand must not be raised,
Foot stirr'd, nor voice be utter'd, said the Chief,
Till the word pass : impatience would mar all.
God hath deliver'd over to your hands
His enemies and ours, so we but see
The occasion wisely. Not till the word pass
From man to man transmitted, "In the name
"Of God, for Spain and Vengeance !" let a hand
Be lifted ; on obedience all depends.
Their march below with noise of horse and foot
And haply with the clang of instruments,
Might drown all other signal, this is sure ;
But wait it calmly ; it will not be given
Till the whole line hath enter'd in the toils.
Comrades, be patient, so shall none escape
Who once set foot within these straits of death.
Thus had Pelayo on the Mountaineers
With frequent and impressive charge enforced
The needful exhortation. This alone
He doubted, that the Musselmen might see
The perils of the vale, and warily
Forbear to enter. But they thought to find,
As Guisla told, the main Asturian force
Seeking concealment there, no other aid
Soliciting from these their native hills ;
And that the babes and women having fallen
In thralldom, they would lay their weapons down,
And supplicate forgiveness for their sake.
Nor did the Moors perceive in what a strait
They enter'd ; for the morn had risen o'ercast,
And when the Sun had reach'd the height of heaven,
Dimly his pale and beamless orb was seen
Moving through mist. A soft and gentle rain,
Scarce heavier than the summer's evening dew,

Descended, . . . through so still an atmosphere,
That every leaf upon the moveless trees
Was studded o'er with rain-drops, bright and full,
None falling till from its own weight o'ersworn
The motion came.

Low on the mountain side
The fleecy vapour hung, and in its veil
With all their dreadful preparations wrapt
The Mountaineers ; . . . in breathless hope they lay,
Some blessing God in silence for the power
This day vouchsafed ; others with fervency
Of prayer and vow invoked the Mother-Maid,
Beseeching her that in this favouring hour
She would be strongly with them. From below
Meantime distinct they heard the passing tramp
Of horse and foot, continuous as the sound
Of Deva's stream, and barbarous tongues commixt
With laughter, and with frequent shouts, . . . for all
Exultant came, expecting sure success ;
Blind wretches over whom the ruin hung !

They say, quoth one, that though the Prophet's soul
Doth with the black-eyed Houris bathe in bliss,
Life hath not left his body, which bears up
By its miraculous power the holy tomb,
And holds it at Medina in the air
Buoyant between the temple's floor and roof :
And there the Angels fly to him with news
From East, West, North, and South, of what befalls
His faithful people. If when he shall hear
The tale of this day's work, he should for joy
Forget that he is dead, and walk abroad, . . .
It were as good a miracle as when
He sliced the moon ! Sir Angel hear me now,
Whoe'er thou be'st who art about to speed

From Spain to Araby ! when thou hast got
 The Prophet's ear, be sure thou tellest him
 How bravely Ghauleb did his part to-day,
 And with what special reverence he alone
 Desired thee to commend him to his grace ! . . .
 Fie on thee, scoffer that thou art ! replied
 His comrade ; thou wilt never leave these gibes
 Till some commission'd arrow through the teeth
 Shall nail the offending tongue. Hast thou not heard
 How when our clay is leaven'd first with life,
 The ministering Angel brings it from that spot
 Whereon 'tis written in the eternal book
 That soul and body must their parting take,
 And earth to earth return ? How knowest thou
 But that the Spirit who compounded thee,
 To distant Syria from this very vale
 Bore thy component dust, and Azrael here
 Awaits thee at this hour ? . . . Little thought he
 Who spake, that in that valley at that hour
 One death awaited both !

Thus they pursued
 Toward the cave their inauspicious way.
 Weak childhood there and ineffective age
 In the chambers of the rock were placed secure ;
 But of the women, all whom with the babes
 Maternal care detain'd not, were aloft
 To aid in the destruction ; by the side
 Of fathers, brethren, husbands, station'd there,
 They watch and pray. Pelayo in the cave
 With the venerable primate took his post.
 Ranged on the rising cliffs on either hand,
 Vigilant sentinels with eye intent
 Observe his movements, when to take the word
 And pass it forward. He in arms complete
 Stands in the portal : a stern majesty
 Reign'd in his countenance severe that hour,

And in his eye a deep and dreadful joy
Shone, as advancing up the vale he saw
The Moorish banners. God hath blinded them !
He said ; the measure of their crimes is full !
O Vale of Deva, famous shalt thou be
From this day forth for ever ; and to these
Thy springs shall unborn generations come
In pilgrimage, and hallow with their prayers
The cradle of their native monarchy !

There was a stirring in the air, the sun
Prevail'd, and gradually the brightening mist
Began to rise and melt. A jutting crag
Upon the right projected o'er the stream,
Not farther from the cave than a strong hand
Expert, with deadly aim, might cast the spear,
Or a strong voice, pitch'd to full compass, make
Its clear articulation heard distinct.
A venturous dalesman, once ascending there
To rob the eagle's nest, had fallen, and hung
Among the heather, wondrously preserved :
Therefore had he with pious gratitude
Placed on that overhanging brow a Cross,
Tall as the mast of some light fisher's skiff,
And from the vale conspicuous. As the Moors
Advanced, the Chieftain in the van was seen,
Known by his arms, and from the crag a voice
Pronounced his name, . . . Alcahman ! ho, look up,
Alcahman ! As the floating mist drew up,
It had divided there, and open'd round
The Cross ; part clinging to the rock beneath,
Hovering and waving part in fleecy folds,
A canopy of silver light condensed
To shape and substance. In the midst there stood
A female form, one hand upon the Cross,

The other raised in menacing act ; below
 Loose flow'd her raiment, but her breast was arm'd,
 And helmeted her head. The Moor turn'd pale,
 For on the walls of Auria he had seen
 That well-known figure, and had well believed
 She rested with the dead. What, ho ! she cried,
 Alcahman ! In the name of all who fell
 At Auria in the massacre, this hour
 I summon thee before the throne of God
 To answer for the innocent blood ! This hour,
 Moor, Miscreant, Murderer, Child of Hell, this hour
 I summon thee to judgment ! . . . In the name
 Of God ! for Spain and Vengeance !

Thus she closed

Her speech ; for taking from the Primate's hand
 That oaken cross which at the sacring rites
 Had served for crosier, at the cavern's mouth
 Pelayo lifted it and gave the word.
 From voice to voice on either side it pass'd
 With rapid repetition, . . . In the name
 Of God ! for Spain and Vengeance ! and forthwith
 On either side along the whole defile
 The Asturians shouting in the name of God,
 Set the whole ruin loose ! huge trunks and stones,
 And loosen'd crags, down down they roll'd with rush
 And bound, and thundering force. Such was the fall
 As when some city by the labouring earth
 Heaved from its strong foundations is cast down,
 And all its dwellings, towers, and palaces,
 In one wide desolation prostrated.
 From end to end of that long strait, the crash
 Was heard continuous, and commixt with sounds
 More dreadful, shrieks of horror and despair,
 And death, . . . the wild and agonising cry
 Of that whole host in one destruction whelm'd.
 Vain was all valour there, all martial skill ;

The valiant arm is helpless now ; the feet
Swift in the race avail not now to save ;
They perish, all their thousands perish there, . . .
Horsemen and infantry they perish all, . . .
The outward armour and the bones within
Broken and bruised and crush'd. Echo prolong'd
The long uproar : a silence then ensued,
Through which the sound of Deva's stream was heard,
A lonely voice of waters, wild and sweet ;
The lingering groan, the faintly-utter'd prayer,
The louder curses of despairing death,
Ascended not so high. Down from the cave
Pelayo hastes, the Asturians hasten down,
Fierce and immitigable down they speed
On all sides, and along the vale of blood
The avenging sword did mercy's work that hour.

XXIV.

RODERICK AND COUNT JULIAN.

THOU hast been busy, Death ! this day, and yet
But half thy work is done ; the Gates of Hell
Are throng'd, yet twice ten thousand spirits more,
Who from their warm and healthful tenements
Fear no divorce, must ere the sun go down
Enter the world of woe ! the Gate of Heaven
Is open too, and Angels round the throne
Of Mercy on their golden harps this day
Shall sing the triumphs of Redeeming Love.

There was a Church at Cangas dedicate
To that Apostle unto whom his Lord

Had given the keys ; a humble edifice,
Whose rude and time-worn structure suited well
That vale among the mountains. Its low roof
With stone plants and with moss was overgrown,
Short fern, and richer weeds which from the eaves
Hung their long tresses down. White lichens clothed
The sides, save where the ivy spread, which bower'd
The porch, and clustering round the pointed wall,
Wherein two bells, each open to the wind,
Hung side by side, threaded with hairy shoots
The double nich ; and climbing to the cross,
Wreathed it and half conceal'd its sacred form
With bushy tufts luxuriant. Here in the font, . . .
Borne hither with rejoicing and with prayers
Of all the happy land who saw in him
The lineage of their ancient Chiefs renew'd, . . .
The Prince had been immersed : and here within
An oaken galilee, now black with age,
His old Iberian ancestors were laid.

Two stately oaks stood nigh, in the full growth
Of many a century. They had flourish'd there
Before the Gothic sword was felt in Spain,
And when the ancient sceptre of the Goths
Was broken, there they flourish'd still. Their boughs
Mingled on high, and stretching wide around,
Form'd a deep shade, beneath which canopy
Upon the ground Count Julian's board was spread,
For to his daughter he had left his tent
Pitch'd for her use hard by. He at the board
Sate with his trusted Captains, Gunderick,
Felix and Miro, Theudered and Paul,
Basil and Cottila, and Virimar,
Men through all fortunes faithful to their Lord,
And to that old and tried fidelity,

By personal love and honour held in ties
Strong as religious bonds. As there they sate,
In the distant vale a rising dust was seen,
And frequent flash of steel, . . . the flying fight
Of men who, by a fiery foe pursued,
Put forth their coursers at full speed, to reach
The aid in which they trust. Up sprung the Chiefs,
And hastily taking helm and shield, and spear,
Sped to their post.

Amid the chestnut groves
On Sella's side, Alphonso had in charge
To watch the foe ; a prowling band came nigh,
Whom with the ardour of impetuous youth
He charged and followed them in close pursuit :
Quick succours join'd them ; and the strife grew hot,
Ere Pedro hastening to bring off his son,
Or Julian and his Captains, . . . bent alike
That hour to abstain from combat, (for by this
Full sure they deem'd Alcahman had secured
The easy means of certain victory,) . . .
Could reach the spot. Both thus in their intent
According, somewhat had they now allay'd
The fury of the fight, though still spears flew,
And strokes of sword and mace were interchanged,
When passing through the troop a Moor came up
On errand from the Chief, to Julian sent ;
A fatal errand fatally perform'd
For Julian, for the Chief, and for himself,
And all that host of Musselmén he brought ;
For while with well-dissembled words he lured
The warrior's ear, the dexterous ruffian mark'd
The favouring moment and unguarded place,
And plunged a javelin in his side. The Count
Fell, but in falling called on Cottila,
Treachery ! the Moor ! the Moor ! . . . He too on
whom

He call'd had seen the blow from whence it came,
And seized the murderer. Miscreant ! he exclaim'd,
Who set thee on ? The Musselman, who saw
His secret purpose baffled, undismayed,
Replies, What I have done is authorised ;
To punish treachery and prevent worse ill
Orpas and Abulcacem sent me here ;
The service of the Caliph and the Faith
Required the blow.

The Prophet and the Fiend
Reward thee then ! cried Cottila ; meantime
Take thou from me thy proper earthly meed ;
Villain ! . . . and lifting as he spake the sword,
He smote him on the neck : the trenchant blade
Through vein and artery pass'd and yielding bone ;
And on the shoulder, as the assassin dropt,
His head half-severed fell. The curse of God
Fall on the Caliph and the Faith and thee !
Stamping for anguish, Cottila pursued ;
African dogs, thus is it ye requite
Our services ? . . . But dearly shall ye pay
For this day's work ! . . . O Fellow-soldiers, here,
Stretching his hands toward the host, he cried,
Behold your noble leader basely slain !
He who for twenty years hath led us forth
To war, and brought us home with victory,
Here he lies foully murdered, . . . by the Moors, . . .
Those whom he trusted, whom he served so well !
Our turn is next ! but neither will we wait
Idly, nor tamely fall !

Amid the grief,
Tumult, and rage, of those who gather'd round,
When Julian could be heard, I have yet life,
He said, for vengeance. Virimar, speed thou
To yonder Mountaineers, and tell their Chiefs
That Julian's veteran army joins this day

Pelayo's standard ! The command devolves
On Gunderick. Fellow-soldiers, who so well
Redress'd the wrongs of your old General,
Ye will not let his death go unrevenged ! . . .
Tears then were seen on many an iron cheek,
And groans were heard from many a resolute heart,
And vows with imprecations mix'd went forth,
And curses check'd by sobs. Bear me apart,
Said Julian, with a faint and painful voice,
And let me see my daughter ere I die.

Scarce had he spoken when the pitying throng
Divide before her. Eagerly she came ;
A deep and fearful lustre in her eye,
A look of settled woe, . . . pale, deadly pale,
Yet to no lamentation giving way,
Nor tears, nor groans ; . . . within her breaking heart
She bore the grief, and kneeling solemnly
Beside him, raised her awful hands to heaven,
And cried, Lord God ! be with him in this hour !
Two things have I to think of, O my child,
Vengeance and thee ; said Julian. For the first
I have provided ; what remains of life
As best may comfort thee may so be best
Employ'd ; let me be borne within the church,
And thou, with that good man who follows thee,
Attend me there.

Thus when Florinda heard
Her father speak, a gleam of heavenly joy
Shone through the anguish of her countenance.
O gracious God, she cried, my prayers are heard ;
Now let me die ! . . . They raised him from the earth ;
He, knitting as they lifted him his brow,
Drew in through open lips and teeth firm-closed
His painful breath, and on the lance laid hand,
Lest its long shaft should shake the mortal wound.

Gently his men with slow and steady step
 Their suffering burthen bore, and in the Church
 Before the altar laid him down, his head
 Upon Florinda's knees. . . . Now, friends, said he,
 Farewell. I ever hoped to meet my death
 Among ye, like a soldier, . . . but not thus !
 Go, join the Asturians ; and in after years,
 When of your old commander ye shall talk,
 How well he loved his followers, what he was
 In battle, and how basely he was slain,
 Let not the tale its fit completion lack,
 But say how bravely was his death revenged.
 Vengeance ! in that good word doth Julian make
 His testament ; your faithful swords must give
 The will its full performance. Leave me now,
 I have done with worldly things. Comrades, farewell,
 And love my memory !

They with copious tears

Of burning anger, grief exasperating
 Their rage, and fury giving force to grief,
 Hasten'd to form their ranks against the Moors.
 Julian meantime toward the altar turn'd
 His languid eyes : That Image, is it not
 St. Peter, he inquired, he who denied
 His Lord and was forgiven ? . . . Roderick rejoin'd,
 It is the Apostle ; and may that same Lord,
 O Julian, to thy soul's salvation bless
 The seasonable thought.

The dying Count

Then fix'd upon the Goth his earnest eyes.
 No time, said he, is this for bravery,
 As little for dissemblance. I would fain
 Die in the faith wherein my fathers died,
 Whereto they pledged me in mine infancy. . . .
 A soldier's habits, he pursued, have steel'd
 My spirit, and perhaps I do not fear

This passage as I ought. But if to feel
That I have sinn'd, and from my soul renounce
The Impostor's faith, which never in that soul
Obtain'd a place, . . . if at the Saviour's feet,
Laden with guilt, to cast myself and cry,
Lord, I believe ! . . . help thou my unbelief ! . . .
If this in the sincerity of death
Sufficeth, . . . Father, let me from thy lips
Receive the assurances with which the Church
Doth bless the dying Christian.

Roderick raised
His eyes to Heaven, and crossing on his breast
His open palms, Mysterious are thy ways
And merciful, O gracious Lord ! he cried,
Who to this end hast thus been pleased to lead
My wandering steps ! O Father, this thy son
Hath sinn'd and gone astray : but hast not Thou
Said, When the sinner from his evil ways
Turneth, that he shall save his soul alive,
And Angels at the sight rejoice in Heaven ?
Therefore do I, in thy most holy name,
Into thy family receive again
Him who was lost, and in that name absolve
The Penitent. . . . So saying on the head
Of Julian solemnly he laid his hands.
Then to the altar tremblingly he turn'd,
And took the bread, and breaking it, pursued,
Julian ! receive from me the Bread of Life !
In silence reverently the Count partook
The reconciling rite, and to his lips
Roderick then held the consecrated cup.

Me too ! exclaim'd Florinda, who till then
Had listen'd speechlessly ; Thou Man of God,
I also must partake ! The Lord hath heard

My prayers ! one sacrament, . . . one hour, . . . one
grave, . . .

One resurrection !

That dread office done,
Count Julian with amazement saw the Priest
Kneel down before him. By the sacrament
Which we have here partaken, Roderick cried,
In this most awful moment ; by that hope, . .
That holy faith which comforts thee in death,
Grant thy forgiveness, Julian, ere thou diest !
Behold the man who most hath injured thee !
Roderick, the wretched Goth, the guilty cause
Of all thy guilt, . . . the unworthy instrument
Of thy redemption, . . . kneels before thee here,
And prays to be forgiven !

Roderick ! exclaim'd

The dying Count, . . . Roderick ! . . . and from the floor
With violent effort half he raised himself ;
The spear hung heavy in his side, and pain
And weakness overcame him, that he fell
Back on his daughter's lap. O Death, cried he, . . .
Passing his hand across his cold damp brow, . . .
Thou tamest the strong limb, and conquerest
The stubborn heart ! But yesterday I said
One Heaven could not contain mine enemy
And me : and now I lift my dying voice
To say, Forgive me, Lord, as I forgive
Him who hath done the wrong ! . . . He closed his eyes
A moment ; then with sudden impulse cried, . . .
Roderick, thy wife is dead, . . . the Church hath power
To free thee from thy vows, . . . the broken heart
Might yet be heal'd, the wrong redress'd, the throne
Rebuilt by that same hand which pull'd it down,
And these cursed Africans. . . . Oh for a month
Of that waste life which millions misbestow ! . . .
His voice was passionate, and in his eye

With glowing animation while he spake
The vehement spirit shone : its effort soon
Was pass'd, and painfully with feeble breath
In slow and difficult utterance he pursued, . . .
Vain hope, if all the evil was ordain'd,
And this wide wreck the will and work of Heaven,
We but the poor occasion ! Death will make
All clear, and joining us in better worlds,
Complete our union there ! Do for me now
One friendly office more : draw forth the spear,
And free me from this pain ! . . . Receive his soul,
Saviour ! exclaim'd the Goth, as he perform'd
The fatal service. Julian cried, O friend ! . . .
True friend ! . . . and gave to him his dying hand.
Then said he to Florinda, I go first,
Thou followest ! . . . kiss me, child ! . . . and now
good night !
When from her father's body she arose,
Her cheek was flush'd, and in her eyes there beam'd
A wilder brightness. On the Goth she gazed
While underneath the emotions of that hour
Exhausted life gave way. O God ! she said,
Lifting her hands, thou hast restored me all, . . .
All . . . in one hour ! . . . and round his neck she threw
Her arms and cried, My Roderick ! mine in Heaven !
Groaning, he clasp'd her close, and in that act
And agony her happy spirit fled.

XXV.

RODERICK IN BATTLE.

EIGHT thousand men had to Asturias march'd
Beneath Count Julian's banner ; the remains
Of that brave army which in Africa

So well against the Musselman made head,
Till sense of injuries unsupportable,
And raging thirst of vengeance, overthrew
Their leader's noble spirit. To revenge
His quarrel, twice that number left their bones,
Slain in unnatural battle, on the field
Of Xeres, when the sceptre from the Goths
By righteous Heaven was reft. Others had fallen
Consumed in sieges, alway by the Moor
To the front of war opposed. The policy,
With whatsoever show of honour cloak'd,
Was gross, and this surviving band had oft
At their carousals, of the flagrant wrong,
Held such discourse as stirs the mounting blood,
The common danger with one discontent
Affecting chiefs and men. Nor had the bonds
Of rooted discipline and faith attach'd,
Thus long restrain'd them, had they not known well
That Julian in their just resentment shared,
And fix'd their hopes on him. Slight impulse now
Sufficed to make these fiery martialists
Break forth in open fury ; and though first
Count Pedro listen'd with suspicious ear
To Julian's dying errand, deeming it
Some new decoy of treason, . . . when he found
As econd legate followed Virimar,
And then a third, and saw the turbulence
Of the camp, and how against the Moor in haste
They form'd their lines, he knew that Providence
This hour had for his country interposed,
And in such faith advanced to use the aid
Thus wondrously ordain'd. The eager Chiefs
Hasten to greet him, Cottila and Paul,
Basil and Miro, Theudered, Gunderick,
Felix, and all who held authority ;
The zealous services of their brave host

They proffer'd, and besought him instantly
To lead against the African their force
Combined, and in good hour assail a foe
Divided, nor for such attack prepared.

While thus they communed, Roderick from the church
Came forth, and seeing Pedro, bent his way
Toward him. Sirs, said he, the Count is dead ;
He died a Christian, reconciled to Heaven,
In faith ; and when his daughter had received
His dying breath, her spirit too took flight.
One sacrament, one death, united them ;
And I beseech ye, ye who from the work
Of blood which lies before us may return, . . .
If, as I think, it should not be my fate . . .
That in one grave with Christian ceremonies
Ye lay them side by side. In Heaven I ween
They are met through mercy : . . . ill befall the man
Who should in death divide them ! . . . Then he turn'd
His speech to Pedro in an under voice ;
The King, said he, I know with noble mind
Will judge of the departed ! Christian like
He died, and with a manly penitence :
They who condemn him most should call to mind
How grievous was the wrong which madden'd him ;
Be that remember'd in his history,
And let no shame be offer'd his remains.

As Pedro would have answer'd, a loud cry
Of menacing imprecation from the troops
Arose ; for Orpas, by the Moorish Chief
Sent to allay the storm his villainy
Had stirred, came hastening on a milk-white steed,
And at safe distance having check'd the rein,
Beckon'd for parley. 'Twas Orelío

On which he rode, Roderick's own battle-horse,
 Who from his master's hand had wont to feed,
 And with a glad docility obey
 His voice familiar. At the sight the Goth
 Started, and indignation to his soul
 Brought back the thoughts and feelings of old times.
 Suffer me, Count, he cried, to answer him,
 And hold these back awhile! Thus having said,
 He waited no reply, but as he was,
 Bareheaded, in his weeds, and all unarm'd,
 Advanced towards the renegade. Sir Priest,
 Quoth Orpas as he came, I hold no talk
 With thee; my errand is with Gunderick
 And the Captains of the host, to whom I bring
 Such liberal offers and clear proof. . . .

The Goth,
 Breaking with scornful voice his speech, exclaim'd,
 What, could no steed but Roderick's serve thy turn?
 I should have thought some sleek and sober mule,
 Long train'd in shackles to procession pace,
 More suited to my lord of Seville's use
 Than this good war-horse, . . . he who never bore
 A villain, until Orpas crossed his back! . . .
 Wretch! cried the astonish'd renegade, and stoopt,
 Foaming with anger, from the saddle-bow
 To reach his weapon. Ere the hasty hand
 Trembling in passion could perform its will,
 Roderick had seized the reins. How now, he cried,
 Orelia! old companion, . . . my good horse, . . .
 Off with this recreant burthen! . . . And with that
 He raised his hand, and rear'd and back'd the steed,
 To that remember'd voice and arm of power
 Obedient. Down the helpless traitor fell,
 Violently thrown, and Roderick over him
 Thrice led with just and unrelenting hand
 The trampling hoofs. Go join Witiza now,

Where he lies howling, the avenger cried,
And tell him Roderick sent thee !

At that sight,
Count Julian's soldiers and the Asturian host
Set up a shout, a joyful shout, which rung
Wide through the welkin. Their exulting cry
With louder acclamation was renew'd,
When from the expiring miscreant's neck they saw
That Roderick took the shield, and round his own
Hung it, and vaulted in the seat. My horse !
My noble horse ! he cried, with flattering hand
Patting his high-arched neck ! the renegade,
I thank him for't, hath kept thee daintily !
Orelia, thou art in thy beauty still,
Thy pride and strength ! Orelia, my good horse,
Once more thou bearest to the field thy Lord,
He who so oft hath fed and cherish'd thee,
He for whose sake, wherever thou wert seen,
Thou wert by all men honour'd. Once again
Thou hast thy proper master ! Do thy part
As thou wert wont ; and bear him gloriously,
My beautiful Orelia, . . . to the last . . .
The happiest of his fields ! . . . Then he drew forth
The scymitar, and waving it aloft,
Rode towards the troops ; its unaccustom'd shape
Disliked him ; Renegade in all things ! cried
The Goth, and cast it from him ; to the Chiefs
Then said, If I have done ye service here,
Help me, I pray you, to a Spanish sword !
The trustiest blade that e'er in Bilbilis
Was dipt, would not to-day be misbestowed
On this right hand ! . . . Go some one, Gunderick cried,
And bring Count Julian's sword. Whoe'er thou art,
The worth which thou hast shown avenging him
Entitles thee to wear it. But thou goest
For battle unequipp'd ; . . . haste there and strip

Yon villain of his armour !

Late he spake,

So fast the Moors came on. It matters not,
 Replied the Goth; there's many a mountaineer,
 Who in no better armour cased this day
 Than his wonted leathern gipion, will be found
 In the hottest battle, yet bring off untouch'd
 The unguarded life he ventures . . . Taking then
 Count Julian's sword, he fitted round his wrist
 The chain, and eyeing the elaborate steel
 With stern regard of joy, The African
 Under unhappy stars was born, he cried,
 Who tastes thy edge! . . . Make ready for the charge!
 They come . . . they come! . . . On, brethren, to the
 field! . . .

The word is Vengeance !

Vengeance was the word ;

From man to man, and rank to rank, it pass'd,
 By every heart enforced, by every voice
 Sent forth in loud defiance of the foe.
 The enemy in shriller sounds return'd
 Their Akbar and the Prophet's trusted name.
 The horsemen lower'd their spears, the infantry
 Deliberately with slow and steady step
 Advanced ; the bowstrings twang'd, and arrows hiss'd,
 And javelins hurtled by. Anon the hosts
 Met in the shock of battle, horse and man
 Conflicting ; shield struck shield, and sword and mace
 And curtle-axe on helm and buckler rung ;
 Armour was riven, and wounds were interchanged,
 And many a spirit from its mortal hold
 Hurried to bliss or bale. Well did the Chiefs
 Of Julian's army in that hour support
 Their old esteem ; and well Count Pedro there
 Enhanced his former praise ; and by his side,
 Rejoicing like a bridegroom in the strife,

Alphonso through the host of infidels
Bore on his bloody lance dismay and death.
But there was worst confusion and uproar,
There widest slaughter and dismay, where, proud
Of his recover'd Lord, Orelío plunged
Through thickest ranks, trampling beneath his feet
The living and the dead. Where'er he turns
The Moors divide and fly. What man is this,
Appall'd they say, 'who to the front of war
Bareheaded offers thus his naked life?
Replete with power he is, and terrible,
Like some destroying Angel! Sure his lips
Have drank of Kaf's dark fountain, and he comes
Strong in his immortality! Fly! fly!
They said, this is no human foe! . . . Nor less
Of wonder fill'd the Spaniards when they saw
How flight and terror went before his way,
And slaughter in his path. Behold, cries one,
With what command and knightly ease he sits
The intrepid steed, and deals from side to side
His dreadful blows! Not Roderick in his power
Bestrode with such command and majesty
That noble war-horse. His loose robe this day
Is death's black banner, shaking from its folds
Dismay and ruin. Of no mortal mould
Is he who in that garb of peace affronts
Whole hosts, and sees them scatter where he turns!
Auspicious Heaven beholds us, and some Saint
Revisits earth!

Ay, cries another, Heaven
Hath ever with especial bounty blest
Above all other lands its favour'd Spain;
Chusing her children forth from all mankind
For its peculiar people, as of yore
Abraham's ungrateful race beneath the Law.
Who knows not how on that most holy night

When peace on Earth by Angels was proclaim'd,
 The light which o'er the fields of Bethlehem shone,
 Irradiated whole Spain? not just display'd,
 As to the Shepherds, and again withdrawn;
 All the long winter hours from eve till morn
 Her forests and her mountains and her plains,
 Her hills and valleys were embathed in light,
 A light which came not from the sun or moon
 Or stars, by secondary powers dispensed,
 But from the fountain springs the Light of Light
 Effluent. And wherefore should we not believe
 That this may be some Saint or Angel, charged
 To lead us to miraculous victory?
 Hath not the Virgin Mother oftentimes
 Descending, clothed in glory, sanctified
 With feet adorable our happy soil? . . .
 Mark'd ye not, said another, how he cast
 In wrath the unhallow'd scymitar away,
 And called for Christian weapon? Oh be sure
 This is the aid of Heaven! On, comrades, on!
 A miracle to-day is wrought for Spain!
 Victory and Vengeance! Hew the miscreants down,
 And spare not! hew them down in sacrifice!
 God is with us! his Saints are in the field!
 Victory! miraculous Victory!

Thus they
 Inflamed with wild belief the keen des're
 Of vengeance on their enemies abor'd.
 The Moorish chief, meantime, o'erlook'd the fight
 From an eminence, and cursed the renegade
 Whose counsels sorting to such ill effect
 Had brought this danger on. Lo, from the East
 Comes fresh alarm! a few poor fugitives
 Well-nigh with fear exanimate came up,
 From Covadonga flying, and the rear
 Of that destruction, scarce with breath to tell

Their dreadful tale. When Abulcacem heard,
Stricken with horror, like a man bereft
Of sense, he stood. O Prophet, he exclaim'd,
A hard and cruel fortune hast thou brought
This day upon thy servant ! Must I then
Here with disgrace and ruin close a life
Of glorious deeds ? But how should man resist
Fate's irreversible decrees, or why
Murmur at what must be ? They who survive
May mourn the evil which this day begins :
My part will soon be done ! . . Grief then gave way
To rage, and cursing Guisla, he pursued,
Oh that that treacherous woman were but here !
It were a consolation to give her
The evil death she merits !

That reward
She hath had, a Moor replied. For when we reach'd
The entrance of the vale, it was her choice
There in the farthest dwellings to be left,
Lest she should see her brother's face ; but thence
We found her flying at the overthrow,
And visiting the treason on her head,
Pierced her with wounds. . . . Poor vengeance for a host
Destroyed ! said Abulcacem in his soul.
Howbeit, resolving to the last to do
His office, he roused up his spirit. Go,
Strike off Count Eudon's head ! he cried ; the fear
Which brought him to our camp will bring him else
In arms against us now ; for Sisibert
And Ebba, he continued thus in thought,
Their uncle's fate for ever bars all plots
Of treason on their part ; no hope have they
Of safety but with us. He call'd them then
With chosen troops to join him in the front
Of battle, that by bravely making head,
Retreat might now be won. Then fiercer raged

The conflict, and more frequent cries of death,
Mingling with imprecations and with prayers,
Rose through the din of war.

By this the blood
Which Deva down her fatal channel pour'd,
Purpling Pionia's course, had reach'd and stain'd
The wider stream of Sella. Soon far off
The frequent glance of spears and gleam of arms
Were seen, which sparkled to the westering orb,
Where down the vale impatient to complete
The glorious work so well that day begun,
Pelayo led his troops. On foot they came,
Chieftains and men alike ; the Oaken Cross
Triumphant borne on high, precedes their march,
And broad and bright the argent banner shone.
Roderick, who dealing death from side to side,
Had through the Moorish army now made way,
Beheld it flash, and judging well what aid
Approach'd, with sudden impulse that way rode,
To tell of what had pass'd, . . . lest in the strife
They should engage with Julian's men, and mar
The mighty consummation. One ran on
To meet him fleet of foot, and having given
His tale to this swift messenger, the Goth
Halted awhile to let Orelío breathe.
Siverian, quoth Pelayo, if mine eyes
Deceive me not, yon horse, whose reeking sides
Are red with slaughter, is the same on whom
The apostate Orpas in his vauntory
Wont to parade the streets of Cordoba.
But thou shouldst know him best ; regard him well :
Is't not Orelío ?

Either it is he,
The old man replied, or one so like to him,
Whom all thought matchless, that similitude
Would be the greater wonder. But behold,

What man is he who in that disarray
Doth with such power and majesty bestride
The noble steed, as if he felt himself
In his own proper seat? Look how he leans
To cherish him; and how the gallant horse
Curves up his stately neck, and bends his head,
As if again to court that gentle touch,
And answer to the voice which praises him.
Can it be Maccabee? rejoin'd the King,
Or are the secret wishes of my soul
Indeed fulfill'd, and hath the grave given up
Its dead? . . . So saying, on the old man he turn'd
Eyes full of wide astonishment, which told
The incipient thought that for incredible
He spake no farther. But enough had pass'd,
For old Siverian started at the words
Like one who sees a spectre, and exclaim'd,
Blind that I was to know him not till now!
My Master, O my Master!

He meantime
With easy pace moved on to meet their march.
King, to Pelayo, he began this day
By means scarce less than miracle, thy throne
Is stablish'd, and the wrongs of Spain revenged.
Orpas the accursed, upon yonder field
Lies ready for the ravens. By the Moors
Treacherously slain, Count Julian will be found
Before Saint Peter's altar; unto him
Grace was vouchsafed; and by that holy power
Which at Visonia from the Primate's hand
Of his own proper act to me was given,
Unworthy as I am, . . . yet sure I think
Not without mystery as the event hath shown, . . .
Did I accept Count Julian's penitence,
And reconcile the dying man to Heaven.
Beside him hath his daughter fallen asleep;

Deal honourably with his remains, and let
One grave with Christian rites receive them both.
Is it not written that as the Tree falls
So shall it lie?

In this and all things else,
Pelayo answer'd, looking wistfully
Upon the Goth, thy pleasure shall be done.
Then Roderick saw that he was known, and turn'd
His head away in silence. But the old man
Laid hold upon his bridle, and look'd up
In his master's face, weeping and silently.
Thereat the Goth with fervent pressure took
His hand, and bending down toward him, said,
My good Siverian, go not thou this day
To war! I charge thee keep thyself from harm!
Thou art past the age for battles, and with whom
Hereafter should thy mistress talk of me
If thou wert gone? . . . Thou seest I am unarm'd;
Thus disarray'd as thou beholdest me,
Clean through yon miscreant army have I cut
My way unhurt; but being once by Heaven
Preserved, I would not perish with the guilt
Of having wilfully provoked my death.
Give me thy helmet and thy cuirass! . . . nay, . . .
Thou wert not wont to let me ask in vain,
Nor to gainsay me when my will was known!
To thee methinks I should be still the King.

Thus saying, they withdrew a little way
Within the trees. Roderick alighted there,
And in the old man's armour dight himself.
Dost thou not marvel by what wondrous chance,
Said he, Orelío to his master's hand
Hath been restored? I found the renegade
Of Seville on his back, and hurl'd him down
Headlong to the earth. The noble animal

Rejoicingly obey'd my hand to shake
The recreant burthen off, and trample out
The life which once I spared in evil hour.
Now let me meet Witiza's viperous sons
In yonder field, and then I may go rest
In peace, . . . my work is done !

And nobly done !

Exclaim'd the old man. Oh ! thou art greater now
Than in that glorious hour of victory
When grovelling in the dust Witiza lay,
The prisoner of thy hand ! . . . Roderick replied,
O good Siverian, happier victory
Thy son hath now achieved ! . . . the victory
Over the world, his sins and his despair.
If on the field my body should be found,
See it, I charge thee, laid in Julian's grave,
And let no idle ear be told for whom
Thou mournest. Thou wilt use Orelio
As doth beseem the steed which hath so oft
Carried a King to battle ; . . . he hath done
Good service for his rightful Lord to-day,
And better yet must do. Siverian, now
Farewell ! I think we shall not meet again
Till it be in that world where never change
Is known, and they who love shall part no more.
Commend me to my mother's prayers, and say
That never man enjoy'd a heavenlier peace
Than Roderick at this hour. O faithful friend,
How dear thou art to me these tears may tell !

With that he fell upon the old man's neck ;
Then vaulted in the saddle, gave the reins,
And soon rejoin'd the host. On, comrades, on !
Victory and Vengeance ! he exclaim'd, and took
The lead on that good charger, he alone
Horsed for the onset. They with one consent

Gave all their voices to the inspiring cry,
 Victory and Vengeance ! and the hills and rocks
 Caught the prophetic shout and roll'd it round.
 Count Pedro's people heard amid the heat
 Of battle, and return'd the glad acclaim.
 The astonish'd Musselmen, on all sides charged,
 Hear that tremendous cry ; yet manfully
 They stood, and every where with gallant front
 Opposed in fair array the shock of war.
 Desperately they fought, like men expert in arms,
 And knowing that no safety could be found,
 Save from their own right hands. No former day
 Of all his long career had seen their chief
 Approved so well ; nor had Witiza's sons
 Ever before this hour achieved in fight
 Such feats of resolute valour. Sisibert
 Beheld Pelayo in the field afoot,
 And twice essay'd beneath his horse's feet
 To thrust him down. Twice did the Prince evade
 The shock, and twice upon his shield received
 The fratricidal sword. Tempt me no more,
 Son of Witiza, cried the indignant chief,
 Lest I forget what mother gave thee birth !
 Go meet thy death from any hand but mine !
 He said and turn'd aside. Fitliest from me !
 Exclaim'd a dreadful voice, as through the throng
 Orelia forced his way ; fitliest from me
 Receive the rightful death too long withheld !
 'Tis Roderick strikes the blow ! And as he spake,
 Upon the traitor's shoulder fierce he drove
 The weapon, well-bestow'd. He in the seat
 Totter'd and fell. The avenger hasten'd on
 In search of Ebba ; and in the heat of fight
 Rejoicing and forgetful of all else,
 Set up his cry as he was wont in youth,
 Roderick the Goth ! . . . his war-cry known so well.

Pelayo eagerly took up the word,
And shouted out his kinsman's name beloved,
Roderick the Goth ! Roderick and Victory !
Roderick and Vengeance ! Odoar gave it forth ;
Urban repeated it, and through his ranks
Count Pedro sent the cry. Not from the field
Of his great victory, when Witiza fell,
With louder acclamations had that name
Been borne abroad upon the winds of heaven.
The unreflecting throng, who yesterday,
If it had pass'd their lips, would with a curse
Have clogged it, echoed it as if it came
From some celestial voice in the air, reveal'd
To be the certain pledge of all their hopes.
Roderick the Goth ! Roderick and Victory !
Roderick and Vengeance ! O'er the field it spread,
All hearts and tongues uniting in the cry ;
Mountains and rocks and vales re-echoed round ;
And he, rejoicing in his strength, rode on,
Laying on the Moors with that good sword, and smote,
And overthrew, and scatter'd, and destroy'd,
And trampled down ; and still at every blow
Exultingly he sent the war-cry forth,
Roderick the Goth ! Roderick and Victory !
Roderick and Vengeance !

Thus he made his way,
Smiting and slaying through the astonish'd ranks,
Till he beheld where, on a fiery barb,
Ebba, performing well a soldier's part,
Dealt to the right and left his deadly blows.
With mutual rage they met. The renegade
Displays a scymitar, the splendid gift
Of Walid from Damascus sent ; its hilt
Emboss'd with gems, its blade of perfect steel,
Which, like a mirror sparkling to the sun
With dazzling splendour, flash'd. The Goth objects

His shield, and on its rim received the edge
Driven from its aim aside, and of its force
Diminish'd. Many a frustrate stroke was dealt
On either part, and many a foin and thrust
Aim'd and rebated ; many a deadly blow,
Straight, or reverse, delivered and repell'd.
Roderick at length with better speed hath reach'd
The apostate's turban, and through all its folds
The true Cantabrian weapon making way
Attain'd his forehead. Wretch ! the avenger cried,
It comes from Roderick's hand ! Roderick the Goth,
Who spared, who trusted thee, and was betray'd !
Go tell thy father now how thou hast sped
With all thy treasons ! Saying thus he seized
The miserable, who, blinded now with blood,
Reel'd in the saddle ; and with sidelong step
Backing Orelia, drew him to the ground.
He shrieking, as beneath the horse's feet
He fell, forgot his late-learnt creed, and called
On Mary's name. The dreadful Goth pass'd on,
Still plunging through the thickest war, and still
Scattering, where'er he turn'd, the affrighted ranks.

O who could tell what deeds were wrought that day ;
Or who endure to hear the tale of rage,
Hatred, and madness, and despair, and fear,
Horror, and wounds, and agony, and death,
The cries, the blasphemies, the shrieks, and groans,
And prayers, which mingled with the din of arms
In one wild uproar of terrific sounds ;
While over all predominant was heard,
Reiterate from the conquerors o'er the field,
Roderick the Goth ! Roderick and Victory !
Roderick and Vengeance ! . . . Woe for Africa !
Woe for the circumcised ! Woe for the faith
Of the lying Ishmaelite that hour ! The Chiefs

Have fallen ; the Moors, confused and captainless,
And panic-stricken, vainly seek to escape
The inevitable fate. Turn where they will,
Strong in his cause, rejoicing in success,
Insatiate at the banquet of revenge,
The enemy is there ; look where they will,
Death hath environed their devoted ranks :
Fly where they will, the avenger and the sword
Await them, . . . wretches ! whom the righteous arm
Hath overtaken ! . . . Join'd in bonds of faith
Accurs'd, the most flagitious of mankind
From all parts met are here ; the apostate Greek,
The vicious Syrian, and the sullen Copt,
The Persian cruel and corrupt of soul,
The Arabian robber, and the prowling sons
Of Africa, who from their thirsty sands
Pray that the locusts on the peopled plain
May settle and prepare their way. Conjoined
Beneath an impious faith, which sanctifies
To them all deeds of wickedness and blood, . . .
Yea, and halloos them on, . . . here are they met
To be conjoin'd in punishment this hour.
For plunder, violation, massacre,
All hideous, all unutterable things,
The righteous, the immitigable sword
Exacts due vengeance now ! the cry of blood
Is heard : the measure of their crimes is full ;
Such mercy as the Moor at Auria gave,
Such mercy hath he found this dreadful hour !

The evening darken'd, but the avenging sword
Turn'd not away its edge till night had closed
Upon the field of blood. The Chieftains then
Blew the recall, and from their perfect work
Return'd rejoicing, all but he for whom
All look'd with most expectance. He full sure

Had thought upon that field to find his end
Desired, and with Florinda in the grave
Rest, in indissoluble union join'd.
But still where through the press of war he went
Half-arm'd, and like a lover seeking death,
The arrows pass'd him by to right and left,
The spear-point pierced him not, the scymitar
Glanced from his helmet ; he, when he beheld
The rout complete, saw that the shield of Heaven
Had been extended over him once more,
And bowed before its will. Upon the banks
Of Sella was Orelia found, his legs
And flanks incarnadined, his poitrel smeared
With froth and foam and gore, his silver mane
Sprinkled with blood, which hung on every hair,
Aspersed like dew-drops ; trembling there he stood
From the toil of battle, and at times set forth
His tremulous voice far echoing loud and shrill,
A frequent anxious cry, with which he seem'd
To call the master whom he loved so well,
And who had thus again forsaken him.
Siverian's helm and cuirass on the grass
Lay near ; and Julian's sword, its hilt and chain
Clotted with blood ; but where was he whose hand
Had wielded it so well that glorious day ? . . .

Days, months, and years, and generations pass'd,
And centuries held their course, before, far off
Within a hermitage near Viseu's walls,
A humble tomb was found, which bore inscribed
In ancient characters King Roderick's name.



MISCELLANEOUS.



Miscellaneous.

ODE,

*Written during the negotiations with Buonaparte,
in January 1814.*

WHO counsels peace at this momentous hour,
When God hath given deliverance to the oppress'd,
And to the injured power?

Who counsels peace, when Vengeance like a flood
Rolls on, no longer now to be repress'd;
When innocent blood

From the four corners of the world cries out
For justice upon one accursed head;

When Freedom hath her holy banners spread
Over all nations, now in one just cause
United; when with one sublime accord
Europe throws off the yoke abhorr'd,
And Loyalty and Faith and Ancient Laws
Follow the avenging sword!

Woe, woe to England, woe and endless shame,
If this heroic land,

False to her feelings and unspotted fame,
Hold out the olive to the tyrant's hand!

Woe to the world, if Buonaparte's throne
Be suffer'd still to stand!

For by what names shall Right and Wrong be known, . . .
What new and courtly phrases must we feign

For Falsehood, Murder, and all monstrous crimes,
 If that perfidious Corsican maintain
 Still his detested reign,
 And France, who yearns even now to break her chain,
 Beneath his iron rule be left to groan ?
 No ! by the innumerable dead,
 Whose blood hath for his lust of power been shed,
 Death only can for his foul deeds atone ;
 That peace which Death and Judgement can bestow,
 That peace be Buonaparte's, . . . that alone !

For sooner shall the Ethiop change his skin,
 Or from the Leopard shall her spots depart,
 Than this man change his old flagitious heart.
 Have ye not seen him in the balance weigh'd,
 And there found wanting ? On the stage of blood
 Foremost the resolute adventurer stood ;
 And when, by many a battle won,
 He placed upon his brow the crown,
 Curbing delirious France beneath his sway,
 Then, like Octavius in old time,
 Fair name might he have handed down,
 Effacing many a stain of former crime.
 Fool ! should he cast away that bright renown !
 Fool ! the redemption proffer'd should he lose !
 When Heaven such grace vouchsafed him that the way
 To Good and Evil lay
 Before him, which to choose.

But Evil was his Good,
 For all too long in blood had he been nurst,
 And ne'er was earth with verier tyrant curst.
 Bold man and bad,
 Remorseless, godless, full of fraud and lies,
 And black with murders and with perjuries,
 Himself in Hell's whole panoply he clad ;

No law but his own headstrong will he knew,
No counsellor but his own wicked heart.
From evil thus portentous strength he drew,
And trampled under foot all human ties,
All holy laws, all natural charities.

O France ! beneath this fierce Barbarian's sway
Disgraced thou art to all succeeding times ;
Rapine, and blood, and fire have mark'd thy way,
All loathsome, all unutterable crimes.
A curse is on thee, France ! from far and wide
It hath gone up to Heaven. All lands have cried
For vengeance upon thy detested head !
All nations curse thee, France ! for wheresoe'er
In peace or war thy banner hath been spread,
All forms of human woe have follow'd there.
The Living and the Dead
Cry out alike against thee ! They who bear,
Crouching beneath its weight, thine iron yoke,
Join in the bitterness of secret prayer
The voice of that innumerable throng,
Whose slaughter'd spirits day and night invoke
The Everlasting Judge of right and wrong,
How long, O Lord ! Holy and Just, how long !

A merciless oppressor hast thou been,
Thyself remorselessly oppress'd meantime ;
Greedy of war, when all that thou couldst gain
Was but to dye thy soul with deeper crime,
And rivet faster round thyself the chain.
O blind to honour, and to interest blind,
When thus in abject servitude resign'd
To this barbarian upstart, thou couldst brave
God's justice, and the heart of human kind !
Madly thou thoughtest to enslave the world,
Thyself the while a miserable slave.

Behold the flag of vengeance is unfurl'd !
The dreadful armies of the North advance ;
While England, Portugal, and Spain combined,
Give their triumphant banners to the wind,
And stand victorious in the fields of France.

One man hath been for ten long wretched years
The cause of all this blood and all these tears ;
One man in this most awful point of time
Draws on thy danger, as he caused thy crime.

Wait not too long the event,
For now whole Europe comes against thee bent,
His wiles and their own strength the nations know ;
Wise from past wrongs, on future peace intent,
The People and the Princes, with one mind,
From all parts move against the general foe :
One act of justice, one atoning blow,
One execrable head laid low,
Even yet, O France ! averts thy punishment.
Open thine eyes ! too long hast thou been blind ;
Take vengeance for thyself, and for mankind !

France ! if thou lovest thine ancient fame,
Revenge thy sufferings and thy shame !
By the bones which bleach on Jaffa's beach ;
By the blood which on Domingo's shore
Have clogg'd the carrion-birds with gore ;
By the flesh which gorged the wolves of Spain,
Or stiffen'd on the snowy plain
Of frozen Moscovy ;
By the bodies which lie all open to the sky,
Tracking from Elbe to Rhine the Tyrant's flight ;
By the widow's and the orphan's cry ;
By the childless parent's misery ;
By the lives which he hath shed ;
By the ruin he hath spread ;

By the prayers which rise for curses on his head ;
Redeem, O France ! thine ancient fame,
Revenge thy sufferings and thy shame,
Open thine eyes ! . . . too long has thou been blind ;
Take vengeance for thyself, and for mankind !

By those horrors which the night
Witness'd, when the torches' light
To the assembled murderers show'd
Where the blood of Condé flow'd ;
By thy murder'd Pichegru's fame ;
By murder'd Wright, . . . an English name ;
By murder'd Palm's atrocious doom ;
By murder'd Hofer's martyrdom ;
Oh ! by the virtuous blood thus vilely spilt,
The Villain's own peculiar private guilt,
Open thine eyes ! too long hast thou been blind !
Take vengeance for thyself and for mankind !

THE HOLLY TREE.

O READER ! hast thou ever stood to see
The Holly Tree ?
The eye that contemplates it well perceives
Its glossy leaves
Order'd by an intelligence so wise,
As might confound the Atheist's sophistries.

Below, a circling fence, its leaves are seen
Wrinkled and keen ;
No grazing cattle through their prickly round
Can reach to wound ;
But as they grow where nothing is to fear,
Smooth and unarm'd the pointless leaves appear.

I love to view these things with curious eyes,
And moralise :
And in this wisdom of the Holly Tree
Can emblems see
Wherewith perchance to make a pleasant rhyme,
One which may profit in the after time.

Thus, though abroad perchance I might appear
Harsh and austere,
To those who on my leisure would intrude
Reserved and rude,
Gentle at home amid my friends I'd be,
Like the high leaves upon the Holly Tree.

And should my youth, as youth is apt, I know,
Some harshness show,
All vain asperities I day by day
Would wear away,
Till the smooth temper of my age should be
Like the high leaves upon the Holly Tree.

And as when all the summer trees are seen
So bright and green,
The Holly leaves a sober hue display
Less bright than they,
But when the bare and wintry woods we see,
What then so cheerful as the Holly Tree ?

So serious should my youth appear among
The thoughtless throng,
So would I seem amid the young and gay
More grave than they
That in my age as cheerful I might be .
As the green winter of the Holly Tree.

DONICA.

"In Finland there is a castle which is called the New Rock, moated about with a river of unsounded depth, the water black, and the fish therein very distasteful to the palate. In this are spectres often seen, which foreshow either the death of the Governor, or of some prime officer belonging to the place; and most commonly it appeareth in the shape of a harper, sweetly singing and dallying and playing under the water.

"It is reported of one Donica, that after she was dead, the Devil walked in her body for the space of two years, so that none suspected but she was still alive; for she did both speak and eat, though very sparingly; only she had a deep paleness on her countenance, which was the only sign of death. At length a Magician coming by where she was then in the company of many other virgins, as soon as he beheld her he said, 'Fair Maids, why keep you company with this dead Virgin, whom you suppose to be alive?' when, taking away the magic charm which was tied under her arm, the body fell down lifeless and without motion."

The following Ballad is founded on these stories. They are to be found in the notes to *The Hierarchies of the Blessed Angels*; a Poem by Thomas Heywood, printed in folio by Adam Islip, 1635.

HIGH on a rock whose castle shade
Darken'd the lake below,
In ancient strength majestic stood
The towers of Arlinkow.

The fisher in the lake below
Durst never cast his net,
Nor ever swallow in its waves
Her passing wing would wet.

The cattle from its ominous banks
In wild alarm would run,
Though parch'd with thirst, and faint beneath
The summer's scorching sun.

For sometimes when no passing breeze
The long lank sedges waved,
All white with foam and heaving high
Its deafening billows raved.

And when the tempest from its base
The rooted pine would shake,
The powerless storm unruffling swept
Across the calm dead lake.

And ever then when death drew near
The house of Arlinkow,
Its dark unfathom'd waters sent
Strange music from below.

The Lord of Arlinkow was old,
One only child had he,
Donica was the Maiden's name,
As fair as fair might be.

A bloom as bright as opening morn
Suffused her clear white cheek ;
The music of her voice was mild,
Her full dark eyes were meek.

Far was her beauty known, for none
So fair could Finland boast ;
Her parents loved the Maiden much,
Young Eberhard loved her most.

Together did they hope to tread
The pleasant path of life,
For now the day drew near to make
Donica Eberhard's wife.

The eve was fair and mild the air,
Along the lake they stray ;
The eastern hill reflected bright
The tints of fading day.

And brightly o'er the water stream'd
The liquid radiance wide ;
Donica's little dog ran on
And gambol'd at her side.

Youth, health, and love bloom'd on her cheek,
Her full dark eyes express
In many a glance to Eberhard
Her soul's meek tenderness.

Nor sound was heard, nor passing gale
Sigh'd through the long lank sedge ;
The air was hush'd, no little wave
Dimpled the water's edge :

When suddenly the lake sent forth
Its music from beneath,
And slowly o'er the waters sail'd
The solemn sounds of death.

As those deep sounds of death arose
Donica's cheek grew pale,
And in the arms of Eberhard
The lifeless Maiden fell.

Loudly the Youth in terror shriek'd,
And loud he call'd for aid,
And with a wild and eager look
Gazed on the lifeless Maid.

But soon again did better thoughts
In Eberhard arise,
And he with trembling hope beheld
The Maiden raise her eyes.

And on his arm reclined she moved
With feeble pace and slow,
And soon with strength recover'd reach'd
The towers of Arlinkow.

Yet never to Donica's cheeks
Return'd their lively hue ;
Her cheeks were deathly white and wan,
Her lips a livid blue ;

Her eyes so bright and black of yore
Were now more black and bright,
And beam'd strange lustre in her face
So deadly wan and white.

The dog that gambol'd by her side,
And loved with her to stray,
Now at this alter'd mistress howl'd,
And fled in fear away.

Yet did the faithful Eberhard
Not love the Maid the less ;
He gazed with sorrow, but he gazed
With deeper tenderness.

And when he found her health unharm'd
He would not brook delay,
But press'd the not unwilling Maid
To fix the bridal day.

And when at length it came, with joy
 He hail'd the bridal day,
 And onward to the house of God
 They went their willing way.

But when they at the altar stood,
 And heard the sacred rite,
 The hallow'd tapers dimly stream'd
 A pale sulphureous light.

And when the Youth with holy warmth
 Her hand in his did hold,
 Sudden he felt Donica's hand
 Grow deadly damp and cold.

But loudly then he shriek'd, for lo !
 A Spirit met his view,
 And Eberhard in the angel form
 His own Donica knew.

That instant from her earthly frame
 A Dæmon howling fled,
 And at the side of Eberhard
 The livid corpse fell dead.

LORD WILLIAM.

An imitation of this Ballad in French verse, by J. F. Châtelain,
 was printed at Tournay, about 1820.

No eye beheld when William plunged
 Young Edmund in the stream,
 No human ear but William's heard
 Young Edmund's drowning scream.

Submissive all the vassals own'd
The murderer for the Lord,
And he as rightful heir possess'd
The house of Erlingford.

The ancient house of Erlingford
Stood in a fair domain,
And Severn's ample waters near
Roll'd through the fertile plain.

And often the way-faring man
Would love to linger there,
Forgetful of his onward road,
To gaze on scenes so fair.

But never could Lord William dare
To gaze on Severn's stream ;
In every wind that swept its waves
He heard young Edmund's scream.

In vain at midnight's silent hour
Sleep closed the murderer's eyes,
In every dream the murderer saw
Young Edmund's form arise.

In vain by restless conscience driven
Lord William left his home,
Far from the scenes that saw his guilt,
In pilgrimage to roam ;

To other climes the pilgrim fled,
But could not fly despair ;
He sought his home again, but peace
Was still a stranger there.

Slow were the passing hours, yet swift
The months appear'd to roll ;
And now the day return'd that shook
With terror William's soul ;

A day that William never felt
Return without dismay,
For well had conscience kalendar'd
Young Edmund's dying day.

A fearful day was that ; the rains
Fell fast with tempest roar,
And the swoln tide of Severn spread
Far on the level shore.

In vain Lord William sought the feast,
In vain he quaff'd the bowl,
And strove with noisy mirth to drown
The anguish of his soul.

The tempest, as its sudden swell
In gusty howlings came,
With cold and death-like feeling seem'd
To thrill his shuddering frame.

Reluctant now, as night came on,
His lonely couch he prest ;
And, wearied out, he sunk to sleep, . . .
To sleep . . . but not to rest.

Beside that couch his brother's form,
Lord Edmund seem'd to stand,
Such and so pale as when in death
He grasp'd his brother's hand ;

Such and so pale his face as when
With faint and faltering tongue,
To William's care, a dying charge,
He left his orphan son.

"I bade thee with a father's love
My orphan Edmund guard ; . . .
Well, William, hast thou kept thy charge !
Take now thy due reward. "

He started up, each limb convulsed
With agonising fear ;
He only heard the storm of night, . . .
'Twas music to his ear.

When lo ! the voice of loud alarm
His inmost soul appals ;
"What ho ! Lord William, rise in haste !
The water saps thy walls ! "

He rose in haste, beneath the walls
He saw the flood appear ;
It hemm'd him round, 'twas midnight now,
No human aid was near.

He heard a shout of joy, for now
A boat approach'd the wall,
And eager to the welcome aid
They crowd for safety all.

"My boat is small," the boatman cried,
" 'Twill bear but one away ;
Come in, Lord William, and do ye
In God's protection stay. "

Strange feeling fill'd them at his voice
Even in that hour of woe,
That, save their Lord, there was not one
Who wish'd with him to go.

But William leapt into the boat,
His terror was so sore ;
"Thou shalt have half my gold," he cried,
"Haste . . . haste to yonder shore."

The boatman plied the oar, the boat
Went light along the stream ;
Sudden Lord William heard a cry
Like Edmund's drowning scream.

The boatman paused, "Methought I heard
A child's distressful cry !"
"'Twas but the howling wind of night,"
Lord William made reply.

"Haste . . . haste . . . ply swift and strong the oar ;
Haste . . . haste across the stream !"
Again Lord William heard a cry
Like Edmund's drowning scream.

"I heard a child's distressful voice,"
The boatman cried again.
"Nay, hasten on . . . the night is dark . . .
And we should search in vain."

"O God ! Lord William, dost thou know
How dreadful 'tis to die ?
And canst thou without pity hear
A child's expiring cry ?

“ How horrible it is to sink
Beneath the closing stream,
To stretch the powerless arms in vain,
In vain for help to scream ! ”

The shriek again was heard : it came
More deep, more piercing loud ;
That instant o’er the flood the moon
Shone through a broken cloud ;

And near them they beheld a child ;
Upon a crag he stood,
A little crag, and all around
Was spread the rising flood.

The boatman plied the oar, the boat
Approach’d his resting-place ;
The moonbeam shone upon the child,
And show’d how pale his face.

“ Now reach thine hand ! ” the boatman cried,
“ Lord William, reach and save ! ”
The child stretch’d forth his little hands
To grasp the hand he gave.

Then William shriek’d ; the hands he felt
Were cold and damp and dead !
He held young Edmund in his arms
A heavier weight than lead.

The boat sunk down, the murderer sunk
Beneath the avenging stream ;
He rose, he shriek’d, no human ear
Heard William’s drowning scream.

THE PIOUS PAINTER.

The legend of the Pious Painter is related in the *Pia Hilaria* of Gazæus; but the Pious Poet has omitted the second part of the story, though it rests upon quite as good authority as the first. It is to be found in the *Fabliaux* of Le Grand.

THE FIRST PART.

THERE once was a painter in Catholic days,
Like JOB who eschewed all evil;
Still on his Madonnas the curious may gaze
With applause and with pleasure, but chiefly his praise
And delight was in painting the Devil.

They were Angels, compared to the Devils he drew,
Who besieged poor St. Anthony's cell;
Such burning hot eyes, such a furnace-like hue!
And round them a sulphurous colouring he threw
That their breath seem'd of brimstone to smell.

And now had the artist a picture begun,
'Twas over the Virgin's church-door;
She stood on the Dragon embracing her Son;
Many Devils already the artist had done,
But this must out-do all before.

The Old Dragon's imps as they fled through the air,
At seeing it paused on the wing;
For he had the likeness so just to a hair,
That they came as Apollyon himself had been there,
To pay their respects to their King.

Every child at beholding it trembled with dread,
And scream'd as he turn'd away quick.
Not an old woman saw it, but, raising her head,
Dropt a bead, made a cross on her wrinkles, and said,
Lord keep me from ugly Old Nick !

What the Painter so earnestly thought on by day,
He sometimes would dream of by night ;
But once he was startled as sleeping he lay ;
'Twas no fancy, no dream, he could plainly survey
That the Devil himself was in sight.

" You rascally dauber ! " old Beelzebub cries,
" Take heed how you wrong me again !
Though your caricatures for myself I despise,
Make me handsomer now in the multitude's eyes,
Or see if I threaten in vain ! "

Now the Painter was bold, and religious beside,
And on faith he had certain reliance ;
So carefully he the grim countenance eyed,
And thank'd him for sitting with Catholic pride,
And sturdily bade him defiance.

Betimes in the morning the Painter arose,
He is ready as soon as 'tis light.
Every look, every line, every feature he knows,
'Tis fresh in his eye, to his labour he goes,
And he has the old Wicked One quite.

Happy man ! he is sure the resemblance can't fail ;
The tip of the nose is like fire,
There's his grin and his fangs, and his dragon-like mail,
And the very identical curl of his tail, . . .
So that nothing is left to desire.

He looks and retouches again with delight ;
'Tis a portrait complete to his mind ;
And exulting again and again at the sight,
He looks round for applause, and he sees with affright
The Original standing behind.

"Fool ! Idiot !" old Beelzebub grinn'd as he spoke,
And stamp on the scaffold in ire ;
The Painter grew pale, for he knew it no joke ;
'Twas a terrible height, and the scaffolding broke,
The Devil could wish it no higher.

"Help . . . help ! Blessed Mary !" he cried in alarm,
As the scaffold sunk under his feet.
From the canvas the Virgin extended her arm,
She caught the good Painter, she saved him from harm ;
There were hundreds who saw in the street.

The Old Dragon fled when the wonder he spied,
And cursed his own fruitless endeavour ;
While the Painter call'd after his rage to deride,
Shook his palette and brushes in triumph and cried,
" I'll paint thee more ugly than ever ! "

THE SECOND PART.

THE Painter so pious all praise has acquired
For defying the malice of Hell ;
The Monks the unerring resemblance admired ;
Not a Lady lived near but her portrait desired
From a hand that succeeded so well.

One there was to be painted the number among
Of features most fair to behold ;
The country around of fair Marguerite rung,
Marguerite she was lovely and lively and young,
Her husband was ugly and old.

O Painter, avoid her ! O Painter, take care,
For Satan is watchful for you !
Take heed lest you fall in the Wicked One's snare,
The net is made ready, O Painter, beware
Of Satan and Marguerite too.

She seats herself now, now she lifts up her head,
On the artist she fixes her eyes ;
The colours are ready, the canvas is spread,
He lays on the white, and he lays on the red,
And the features of beauty arise.

He is come to her eyes, eyes so bright and so blue !
There's a look which he cannot express ; . . .
His colours are dull to their quick-sparkling hue ;
More and more on the lady he fixes his view,
On the canvas he looks less and less.

In vain he retouches, her eyes sparkle more,
And that look which fair Marguerite gave !
Many Devils the Artist had painted of yore,
But he never had tried a live Angel before, . . .
St. Anthony, help him and save !

He yielded, alas ! for the truth must be told,
To the Woman, the Tempter, and Fate.
It was settled the Lady so fair to behold,
Should elope from her Husband so ugly and old,
With the Painter so pious of late.

Now Satan exults in his vengeance complete,
To the Husband he makes the scheme known ;
Night comes and the lovers impatiently meet ;
Together they fly, they are seized in the street,
And in prison the Painter is thrown.

With Repentance, his only companion, he lies,
And a dismal companion is she !
On a sudden he saw the Old Enemy rise,
“ Now, you villainous dauber !” Sir Beelzebub cries,
“ You are paid for your insults to me !

“ But my tender heart you may easily move
If to what I propose you agree ;
That picture, . . . be just ! the resemblance improve ;
Make a handsomer portrait, your chains I’ll remove,
And you shall this instant be free.”

Overjoy’d, the conditions so easy he hears,
“ I’ll make you quite handsome !” he said.
He said, and his chain on the Devil appears ;
Released from his prison, released from his fears,
The Painter is snug in his bed.

At morn he arises, composes his look,
And proceeds to his work as before ;
The people beheld him, the culprit they took ;
They thought that the Painter his prison had broke,
And to prison they led him once more.

They opened the dungeon ; . . . behold in his place
In the corner old Beelzebub lay ;
He smirks and he smiles and he leers with a grace,
That the Painter might catch all the charms of his face,
Then vanish’d in lightning away.

Quoth the Painter, "I trust you'll suspect me no more
Since you find my assertions were true.
But I'll alter the picture above the Church-door,
For he never vouchsafed me a sitting before,
And I must give the Devil his due."

THE INCHCAPE ROCK.

An old writer mentions a curious tradition which may be worth quoting. "By east the Isle of May," says he, "twelve miles from all land in the German seas, lyes a great hidden rock, called Inchcape, very dangerous for navigators, because it is overflowed everie tide. It is reported in old times, upon the saide rock there was a bell, fixed upon a tree or timber, which rang continually, being moved by the sea, giving notice to the saylers of the danger. This bell or clocke was put there and maintained by the Abbot of Aberbrothok, and being taken down by a sea pirate, a yeare thereafter he perished upon the same rocke, with ship and goodes, in the righteous judgement of God."—*Stoddart's Remarks on Scotland*.

No stir in the air, no stir in the sea,
The ship was still as she could be,
Her sails from Heaven received no motion,
Her keel was steady in the ocean.

Without either sign or sound of their shock
The waves flow'd over the Inchcape Rock ;
So little they rose, so little they fell,
They did not move the Inchcape Bell.

The Abbot of Aberbrothok
Had placed that bell on the Inchcape Rock ;
On a buoy in the storm it floated and swung,
And over the waves its warning rung.

When the rock was hid by the surge's swell,
The mariners heard the warning bell ;
And then they knew the perilous Rock,
And blest the Abbot of Aberbrothok.

The Sun in Heaven was shining gay,
All things were joyful on that day ;
The sea-birds scream'd as they wheel'd round,
And there was joyaunce in their sound.

The buoy of the Inchcape Bell was seen
A darker speck on the ocean green ;
Sir Ralph the Rover walk'd his deck,
And he fixed his eye on the darker speck.

He felt the cheering power of spring,
It made him whistle, it made him sing ;
His heart was mirthful to excess,
But the Rover's mirth was wickedness.

His eye was on the Inchcape float ;
Quoth he, " My men, put out the boat,
And row me to the Inchcape Rock,
And I'll plague the Abbot of Aberbrothok."

The boat is lower'd, the boatmen row,
And to the Inchcape Rock they go ;
Sir Ralph bent over from the boat,
And he cut the Bell from the Inchcape float.

Down sunk the Bell with a gurgling sound,
The bubbles rose and burst around ;
Quoth Sir Ralph, " The next who comes to the
Rock,
Won't bless the Abbot of Aberbrothok."

Sir Ralph the Rover sail'd away,
He scour'd the seas for many a day ;
And now grown rich with plunder'd store,
He steers his course for Scotland's shore.

So thick a haze o'erspreads the sky
They cannot see the Sun on high ;
The wind hath blown a gale all day,
At evening it hath died away.

On the deck the Rover takes his stand,
So dark it is they see no land.
Quoth Sir Ralph, "It will be lighter soon,
For there is the dawn of the rising Moon."

"Canst hear," said one, "the breakers roar?
For methinks we should be near the shore."
"Now where we are I cannot tell,
But I wish I could hear the Inchcape Bell."

They hear no sound, the swell is strong ;
Though the wind hath fallen they drift along,
Till the vessel strikes with a shivering shock,—
"Oh Christ ! It is the Inchcape Rock !"

Sir Ralph the Rover tore his hair ;
He curst himself in his despair ;
The waves rush in on every side,
The ship is sinking beneath the tide.

But even in his dying fear
One dreadful sound could the Rover hear,
A sound as if with the Inchcape Bell,
The Devil below was ringing his knell.

THE WELL OF ST. KEYNE.

A WELL there is in the west country,
And a clearer one never was seen ;
There is not a wife in the west country
But has heard of the well of St. Keyne.

An oak and an elm tree stand beside,
And behind doth an ash-tree grow,
And a willow from the bank above
Droops to the water below.

A traveller came to the Well of St. Keyne,
Joyfully he drew nigh,
For from cock-crow he had been travelling,
And there was not a cloud in the sky.

He drank of the water so cool and clear,
For thirsty and hot was he,
And he sat down upon the bank
Under the willow tree.

There came a man from the house hard by
At the Well to fill his pail ;
On the Well-side he rested it,
And he bade the Stranger hail.

" Now art thou a bachelor, Stranger ? " quoth he,
" For an if thou hast a wife,
The happiest draught thou hast drank this day
That ever thou didst in thy life.

“ Or has thy good woman, if one thou hast,
Ever here in Cornwall been ?
For an if she have, I'll venture my life
She has drank of the Well of St. Keyne.”

“ I have left a good woman who never was here,”
The Stranger he made reply,
“ But that my draught should be the better for that,
I pray you answer me why ? ”

“ St. Keyne,” quoth the Cornish-man, “ many a time
Drank of this crystal Well,
And before the Angel summon'd her,
She laid on the water a spell.

“ If the Husband of this gifted Well
Shall drink before his Wife,
A happy man thenceforth is he,
For he shall be Master for life.

“ But if the Wife should drink of it first, . .
God help the Husband then ! ”
The Stranger stoopt to the Well of St. Keyne,
And drank of the water again.

“ You drank of the Well I warrant betimes ? ”
He to the Cornish-man said :
But the Cornish-man smiled as the Stranger spake,
And sheepishly shook his head.

“ I hasten'd as soon as the wedding was done,
And left my Wife in the porch ;
But i' faith she had been wiser than me,
For she took a bottle to Church.”

A TRUE BALLAD

OF

ST. ANTIDIUS, THE POPE, AND THE DEVIL.

It is Antidius the Bishop
Who now at even tide,
Taking the air and saying a prayer,
Walks by the river side.

The Devil had business that evening,
And he upon earth would go ;
For it was in the month of August,
And the weather was close below.

He had his books to settle,
And up to earth he hied,
To do it there in the evening air,
All by the river side.

His imps came flying around him,
Of his affairs to tell ;
From the north, and the south, and the east, and
the west ;
They brought him the news that he liked best,
Of the things they had done,
And the souls they had won,
And how they sped well
In the service of Hell.

There came a devil posting in
Return'd from his employ,
Seven years had he been gone from Hell,
And now he came grinning for joy.

“Seven years,” quoth he, “of trouble and toil
Have I labour’d the Pope to win ;
And I to-day have caught him,
He hath done a deadly sin !”
And then he took the Devil’s book,
And wrote the deed therein.

Oh, then King Beelzebub for joy,
He drew his mouth so wide,
You might have seen his iron teeth,
Four and forty from side to side.

He wagg’d his ears, he twisted his tail,
He knew not for joy what to do,
In his hoofs and his horns, in his heels and his corns,
It tickled him all through.

The Bishop who beheld all this,
Straight how to act bethought him ;
He leapt upon the Devil’s back,
And by the horns he caught him.

And he said a Pater-noster
As fast as he could say,
And made a cross on the Devil’s head,
And bade him to Rome away.

Away, away, the Devil flew,
All through the clear moonlight ;
I warrant who saw them on their way
He did not sleep that night.

Without bridle, or saddle, or whip, or spur,
Away they go like the wind ;
The beads of the Bishop are hanging before,
And the tail of the Devil behind.

They met a Witch and she hail'd them
As soon as she came within call ;
"Ava Maria !" the Bishop exclaim'd,
It frightened her broomstick and she got a fall.

He ran against a shooting star,
So fast for fear did he sail,
And he singed the beard of the Bishop
Against a Comet's tail ;
And he pass'd between the horns of the Moon,
With Antidius on his back ;
And there was an eclipse that night,
Which was not in the Almanack.

The Bishop just as they set out,
To tell his beads begun ;
And he was by the bed of the Pope
Before the string was done.

The Pope fell down upon his knees,
In terror and confusion,
And he confess'd the deadly sin,
And he had absolution.

And all the Popes in bliss that be,
Sung, O be joyful ! then ;
And all the Popes in bale that be,
They howl'd for envy then ;
For they before kept jubilee,
Expecting his good company,
Down in the Devil's den.

But what was this the Pope had done
To bind his soul to Hell ?
Ah ! this is the mystery of this wonderful history,
And I wish that I could tell !

QUEEN ORRACA.

But would you know, there you must go,
 You can easily find the way ;
 It is a broad and a well-known road
 That is travell'd by night and by day.
 And you must look in the Devil's book ;
 You will find one debt that was never paid yet
 If you search the leaves throughout ;
 And that is the mystery of this wonderful history,
 And the way to find it out.

QUEEN ORRACA,

AND

THE FIVE MARTYRS OF MOROCCO.

This Legend is related in the Chronicles of Affonso II., and in
 the Historia Serafica of Fr. Manoel da Esperança.

I.

THE Friars five have girt their loins,
 And taken staff in hand ;
 And never shall those Friars again
 Hear mass in Christian land.

They went to Queen Orraca,
 To thank her and bless her then ;
 And Queen Orraca in tears
 Knelt to the holy men.

" Three things, Queen Orraca,
 We prophesy to you :
 Hear us, in the name of God !
 For time will prove them true.

“In Morocco we must martyr’d be ;
Christ hath vouchsafed it thus :
We shall shed our blood for Him
Who shed his blood for us.

“To Coimbra shall our bodies be brought,
Such being the will divine ;
That Christians may behold and feel
Blessings at our shrine.

“And when unto that place of rest
Our bodies shall draw nigh,
Who sees us first, the King or you,
That one that night must die.

“Fare thee well, Queen Orraca !
For thy soul a mass we will say,
Every day as long as we live,
And on thy dying day.”

The Friars they blest her, one by one,
Where she knelt on her knee,
And they departed to the land.
Of the Moors beyond the sea.

2.

“What news, O King Affonso,
What news of the Friars five ?
Have they preach’d to the Miramamolin ;
And are they still alive ?”

“They have fought the fight, O Queen !
They have run the race ;
In robes of white they hold the palm
Before the Throne of Grace.

QUEEN ORRACA.

"All naked in the sun and air
Their mangled bodies lie ;
What Christian dared to bury them,
By the bloody Moors would die."

3.

"What news, O King Affonso,
Of the Martyrs five what news?
Doth the bloody Miramamolin
Their burial still refuse?"

"That on a dunghill they should rot,
The bloody Moor decreed ;
That their dishonour'd bodies should
The dogs and vultures feed :

"But the thunder of God roll'd over them,
And the lightning of God flashed round ;
Nor thing impure, nor man impure,
Could approach the holy ground.

"A thousand miracles appall'd
The cruel Pagan's mind ;
Our brother Pedro brings them here,
In Coimbra to be shrined."

4.

Every altar in Coimbra
Is drest for the festival day ;
All the people in Coimbra
Are dight in their richest array ;

Every bell in Coimbra
Doth merrily, merrily ring ;
The Clergy and the Knights await,
To go forth with the Queen and the King.

“ Come forth, come forth, Queen Orraca !
We make the procession stay.”
“ I beseech thee, King Affonso,
Go you alone to-day.

“ I have pain in my head this morning,
I am ill at heart also :
Go without me, King Affonso,
For I am to faint to go.”

“ The relics of the Martyrs five
All maladies can cure ;
They will requite the charity
You shew'd them once, be sure :

“ Come forth then, Queen Orraca !
You make the procession stay :
It were a scandal and a sin
To abide at home to-day.”

Upon her palfrey she is set,
And forward then they go ;
And over the long bridge they pass,
And up the long hill wind slow.

“ Prick forward, King Affonso,
And do not wait for me ;
To meet them close by Coimbra,
It were discourtesy ;

QUEEN ORRACA.

"A little while I needs must wait,
Till this sore pain be gone ; . . .
I will proceed the best I can,
But do you and your Knights prick on."

The King and his Knights prick'd up the hill
Faster than before ;
The King and his Knights have topt the hill,
And now they are seen no more.

As the King and the Knights went down the hill
A wild boar crost the way ;
"Follow him ! follow him !" cried the King ;
"We have time by the Queen's delay !"

A-hunting of the boar astray
Is King Affonso gone ;
Slowly, slowly, but straight the while,
Queen Orraca is coming on.

And winding now the train appears
Between the olive-trees :
Queen Orraca alighted then,
And fell upon her knees.

The Friars of Alanquer came first,
And next the relics past ; . . .
Queen Orraca looked to see
The King and his Knights come last.

She heard the horses tramp behind ;
At that she turn'd her face :
King Affonso and his Knights came up
All panting from the chase.

"Have pity upon my poor soul,
Holy Martyrs five!" cried she :
"Holy Mary, Mother of God,
Virgin, pray for me!"

5.

That day in Coimbra
Many a heart was gay ;
But the heaviest heart in Coimbra
Was that poor Queen's that day.

The festival is over,
The sun hath sunk in the west ;
All the people in Coimbra
Have betaken themselves to rest

Queen Orraca's Father Confessor
At midnight is awake ;
Kneeling at the Martyrs' shrine,
And praying for her sake.

Just at the midnight hour, when all
Was still as still could be,
Into the Church of Santa Cruz,
Came a saintly company :

All in robes of russet grey,
Poorly were they dight ;
Each one girdled with a cord,
Like a Friar Minorite.

But from those robes of russet grey,
There flow'd a heavenly light ;
For each one was the blessed soul
Of a Friar Minorite.

QUEEN ORRACA.

Brighter than their brethren,
Among the beautiful band :
Five were there who each did bear
A palm branch in his hand.

He who led the brethren,
A living man was he ;
And yet he shone the brightest
Of all the company.

Before the steps of the altar,
Each one bow'd his head ;
And then with solemn voice they sung
The Service of the Dead.

“ And who are ye, ye blessed Saints ? ”
The Father Confessor said ;
“ And for what happy soul sing ye
The Service of the Dead ? ”

“ These are the souls of our brethren in bliss,
The Martyrs five are we :
And this is our father Francisco,
Among us bodily !

“ We are come hither to perform
Our promise to the Queen ;
Go thou to King Affonso,
And say what thou hast seen.”

There was loud knocking at the door,
As the heavenly vision fled ;
And the porter called to the Confessor,
To tell him the Queen was dead.

QUEEN MARY'S CHRISTENING.

THE first wish of Queen Mary's heart
Is, that she may bear a son,
Who shall inherit in his time
The kingdom of Aragon.

She hath put up prayers to all the Saints
This blessing to accord,
But chiefly she hath call'd upon
The Apostles of our Lord.

The second wish of Queen Mary's heart
Is to have that son call'd James,
Because she thought for a Spanish King
'Twas the best of all good names.

To give him this name of her own will
Is what may not be done,
For having applied to all the Twelve
She may not prefer the one.

By one of their names she hath vow'd to call
Her son, if son it should be ;
But which, is a point whereon she must let
The Apostles themselves agree.

Already Queen Mary hath to them
Contracted a grateful debt,
And from their patronage she hoped
For these farther blessings yet.

Alas ! it was not her hap to be
As handsome as she was good ;
And that her husband King Pedro thought so
She very well understood.

298 *QUEEN MARY'S CHRISTENING.*

She had lost him from her lawful bed
For lack of personal graces,
And by prayers to them, and a pious deceit,
She had compass'd his embraces.

But if this hope of a son should fail,
All hope must fail with it then,
For she could not expect by a second device
To compass the King again.

Queen Mary hath had her first heart's wish—
She hath brought forth a beautiful boy ;
And the bells have rung, and masses been sung,
And bonfires have blazed for joy.

And many's the cask of the good red wine,
And many the cask of the white,
Which was broached for joy that morning,
And emptied before it was night.

But now for Queen Mary's second heart's wish,
It must be determined now,
And Bishop Boyl, her Confessor,
Is the person who taught her how.

Twelve waxen tapers he hath had made,
In size and weight the same ;
And to each of these twelve tapers,
He hath given an Apostle's name.

One holy Nun had bleach'd the wax,
Another the wicks had spun ;
And the golden candlesticks were blest,
Which they were set upon.

QUEEN MARY'S CHRISTENING. 299

From that which should burn the longest,
The infant his name must take ;
And the Saint who own'd it was to be
The Patron for his name's sake.

A godlier or a goodlier sight
Was nowhere to be seen,
Methinks, that day, in Christendom,
Than in the chamber of that good Queen.

Twelve little altars have been there
Erected, for the nonce ;
And the twelve tapers are set thereon,
Which are all to be lit at once.

Altars more gorgeously drest
You nowhere could desire ;
At each there stood a minist'ring Priest
In his most rich attire.

A high altar hath there been raised,
Where the crucifix you see ;
And the sacred Pix that shines with gold
And sparkles with jewelry.

Bishop Boyl, with his precious mitre on,
Hath taken there his stand,
In robes which were embroidered
By the Queen's own royal hand.

In one part of the ante-room
The Ladies of the Queen,
All with their rosaries in hand,
Upon their knees are seen,

In the other part of the ante-room
The Chiefs of the realm you behold,
Ricos Omes, and Bishops and Abbots,
And Knights and Barons bold.

Queen Mary could behold all this
As she lay in her state bed ;
And from the pillow needed not
To lift her languid head.

One fear she had, though still her heart
The unwelcome thought eschew'd,
That haply the unlucky lot
Might fall upon St. Jude.

But the Saints, she trusted, that ill chance
Would certainly forfend ;
And moreover there was a double hope
Of seeing the wish'd-for end :

Because there was a double chance
For the best of all good names ;
If it should not be Santiago himself,
It might be the lesser St. James.

And now Bishop Boyl hath said the mass ;
And as soon as the mass was done,
The priests who by the twelve tapers stood
Each instantly lighted one.

The tapers were short and slender too,
Yet to the expectant throng,
Before they to the socket burnt,
The time, I trow seem'd long.

QUEEN MARY'S CHRISTENING. 301

The first that went out was St. Peter,
The second was St. John ;
And now St. Matthias is going,
And now St. Matthew is gone.

Next there went St. Andrew,
There goes St. Philip too ;
And see ! there is an end
Of St. Bartholomew.

St. Simon is in the snuff ;
But it was a matter of doubt
Whether he or St. Thomas could be said
Soonest to have gone out.

There are only three remaining,
St. Jude and the two Sts James :
And great was then Queen Mary's hope
For the best of good names.

Great was then Queen Mary's hope
But greater her fear, I guess,
When one of the three went out,
And that one was St. James the Less.

They are now within less than quarter-inch,
The only remaining two !
When there came a thief in St. James,
And it made a gutter to !

Up started Queen Mary,
Up she sate in her bed :
" I never can call him Judas ! "
She claspt her hands and said.

302 *QUEEN MARY'S CHRISTENING.*

"I never can call him Judas !"
Again did she exclaim ;
"Holy Mother preserve us !
It is not a Christian name !"

She spread her hands and claspt them again,
And the Infant in the cradle
Set up a cry, an angry cry,
As loud as he was able.

"Holy Mother preserve us !"
The Queen her prayer renew'd ;
When in came a moth at the window
And flutter'd about St. Jude.

St. James hath fallen in the socket
But as yet the flame is not out,
And St. Jude hath singed the silly moth
That flutters so blindly about.

And before the flame and the molten wax
That silly moth could kill,
It hath beat out St. Jude with its wings,
And St. James is burning still !

Oh, that was a joy for Queen Mary's heart,
The babe is christened James ;
The Prince of Aragon hath got
The best of all good names !

Glory to Santiago,
The mighty one in war !
James he is call'd, and he shall be
King James the Conqueror !

Now shall the Crescent wane,
The Cross be set on high
In triumph upon many a Mosque ;
Woe, woe to Mawmetry !

Valencia shall be subdued ;
Majorca shall be won ;
The Moors be routed every where ;
Joy, joy, for Aragon !

Shine brighter now, ye stars, that crown
Our Lady del Pilar,
And rejoice in thy grave, Cid Campeador,
Ruy Diez de Bivar !

STANZAS WRITTEN IN MY LIBRARY.

My days among the Dead are past ;
Around me I behold,
Where'er these casual eyes are cast,
The mighty minds of old ;
My never-failing friends are they,
With whom I converse day by day.

With them I take delight in weal,
And seek relief in woe ;
And while I understand and feel
How much to them I owe,
My cheeks have often been bedew'd
With tears of thoughtful gratitude.

My thoughts are with the Dead, with them
I live in long-past years,
Their virtues love, their faults condemn,
Partake their hopes and fears,
And from their lessons seek and find
Instruction with an humble mind.

My hopes are with the Dead, anon
My place with them will be,
And I with them shall travel on-
Through all Futurity;
Yet leaving here a name, I trust,
That will not perish in the dust.

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